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THE OBJECTIONS OF INFIDEL HISTORIANS AND OTHER WRITERS *AGAINST CHRISTIANITY*, CONSIDERED IN EIGHT SERMONS

PREACHED AT THE

BAMPTON LECTURE AT OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR MDCCXCVII.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SERMON

Preached before the Univerſity, on Sunday, Oct. 18, 1795.

By WILLIAM FINCH, LL. D.

RECTOR OF AVINGTON, BERKS, AND OF TACKLEY, OXFORDSHIRE; ONE OF THE CITY LECTURERS AT ST. MARTIN'S, OXFORD; AND LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE.

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OXFORD:

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, FOR THE AUTHOR;

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AND MR. EGERTON, OPPOSITE THE ADMIRALTY,

LONDON.

1797.

TO

LADY JONES,

OF RAMSBURY MANOR,

IN THE COUNTY OF

WILTS:

THESE SERMONS

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

HER LADYSHIP'S

MOST OBEDIENT AND OBLIGED

HUMBLE SERVANT,

W. FINCH.

EXTRACT

FROM THE

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN BAMPTON,

CANON OF SALISBURY.

——" I give and bequeath my Lands and " Eſtates to the Chancellor, Maſters, and " Scholars of the Univerſity of Oxford for " ever, to have and to hold all and ſingular " the ſaid Lands or Eſtates upon truſt, and to " the intents and purpoſes hereinafter men- " tioned; that is to ſay, I will and appoint " that the Vice-Chancellor of the Univerſity " of Oxford for the time being ſhall take and

" receive

" receive all the rents, iſſues, and profits
" thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations,
" and neceſſary deductions made) that he
" pay all the remainder to the endowment
" of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be
" eſtabliſhed for ever in the ſaid Univer-
" ſity, and to be performed in the manner
" following:

" I direct and appoint, that, upon the firſt
" Tueſday in Eaſter Term, a Lecturer be
" yearly choſen by the Heads of Colleges
" only, and by no others, in the room ad-
" joining to the Printing-Houſe, between
" the hours of ten in the morning and two
" in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity
" Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St.
" Mary's in Oxford, between the commence-
" ment of the laſt month in Lent Term, and
" the end of the third week in Act Term.

" Alſo I direct and appoint, that the eight
" Divinity Lecture Sermons ſhall be preached
" upon either of the following ſubjects—to
" confirm and eſtabliſh the Chriſtian Faith,

" and

" and to confute all heretics and ſchiſmatics
" —upon the divine authority of the Holy
" Scriptures—upon the authority of the
" writings of the primitive Fathers, as to
" the faith and practice of the primitive
" Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord
" and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt—upon the Di-
" vinity of the Holy Ghoſt—upon the Ar-
" ticles of the Chriſtian Faith, as compre-
" hended in the Apoſtles' and Nicene
" Creeds.

" Alſo I direct, that thirty copies of the
" eight Divinity Lecture Sermons ſhall be
" always printed, within two months after
" they are preached, and one copy ſhall be
" given to the Chancellor of the Univerſity,
" and one copy to the Head of every Col-
" lege, and one copy to the Mayor of the
" city of Oxford, and one copy to be put
" into the Bodleian Library; and the ex-
" pence of printing them ſhall be paid out
" of the revenue of the Land or Eſtates given
" for eſtabliſhing the Divinity Lecture Ser-
" mons; and the Preacher ſhall not be paid,

" nor

" nor be entitled to the revenue, before they
" are printed.

" Alſo I direct and appoint, that no per-
" ſon ſhall be qualified to preach the Divi-
" nity Lecture Sermons, unleſs he hath taken
" the Degree of Maſter of Arts at leaſt, in
" one of the two Univerſities of Oxford or
" Cambridge; and that the ſame perſon
" ſhall never preach the Divinity Lecture
" Sermons twice."

SERMON I.

2 TIM. iii. 15.

And that from a Child thou haſt known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto Salvation; through Faith, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

SALVATION! that is the effect of wiſdom here, to the production of happineſs hereafter, affording an excellent rule of conduct, and an infinite reward; of this the Scriptures, and they alone are capable. Writings merely human may thus far vie with them, in that *they* likewiſe poſſeſs the power of making us wiſe, but not in general unto Salvation. This happens, not from any defect to which hiſtory, for inſtance, as a ſpecies of compoſition, is neceſſarily liable, but from the almoſt univerſal fault of the writers. It were to be wiſhed, ſaith a certain author[a],

[a] Guy Patin.

that an hiſtorian were, if poſſible, of no party, country, or religion. As to the laſt, the wiſh is, in many inſtances, accompliſhed, particularly among us of this nation; the moſt favourite hiſtorians *are* of none.—The effect of which is far different from what the before-mentioned author intended, ſince there is a general confederacy among ſuch writers againſt it. And is Salvation ſo unimportant, ſo undeſirable an object, as to warrant ſuch neglect, contempt, and rejection of it? No! Yet the diſtinction ariſing from literary eminence is too frequently accompanied with *vanity*; never ſo much gratified as when it can appear diveſted of common prejudices, and averſe from eſtabliſhed opinions. The children of this world, as far as that is concerned, are wiſer than the children of light; a life of vice is often one of diſtreſs, the acknowledged parent of ingenuity; and ſhould that be engaged in a literary career, it will be no wonder if a vicious imagination ſhould give free courſe to the effuſions of a corrupted heart. Nay, ſuch as are the writers, ſuch the readers alſo: in a wealthy and luxurious nation, the generality will rather wiſh that their vices ſhould be nurſed and encouraged, than checked and eradicated, that they ſhould be repreſented not as defects,

defects, but as excellencies. Now among ſuch, immoral and irreligious writings muſt not only gain a free admittance, but alſo be highly acceptable and agreeable. Thoſe too who live by *printing* will, as far as it depends upon them, admit only ſuch works as occaſion them moſt employment; ſuch then as coincide with the public taſte will beſt anſwer this purpoſe, and that being generally depraved and vitiated, writings of this deſcription will commonly obtain the moſt rapid ſale, and be moſt frequently edited.

But this is not the caſe with the Scriptures. The authors ſucceeding one another at conſiderable intervals, and relating a ſomewhat interrupted ſeries of events, from the very creation down to the time in which they wrote, cannot be conceived capable of any joint or preconcerted plan to advance their own intereſts; or to have had any other deſign, than ſuch as all good men muſt cheriſh and encourage, that of introducing virtue, by means of a purer religion, into more extenſive practice, and of thus promoting greater happineſs. They had no inducement to ſcreen, or flatter the vices of any: their writings were intended only for the edification of thoſe for whoſe uſe they were compoſed, and to whom

they were particularly addreſſed; and though ſubſequent councils gave them greater publicity by ſpreading them among all nations, yet this only proves their wiſdom, and excellence, that could thus recommend them to all ages and conditions, after the writers themſelves had become extinct, and were no more. They lived too at a time when the art of printing was not yet invented, and relied on other means of ſupport than book-making; a profeſſion now ſo extenſive, yet when abuſed ſo dangerous, eſpecially to the intereſts of virtue and religion. The ſtudy of hiſtory then is able to make us wiſe; and ſince there is no event entirely different from all that ever before happened, it records ſuch facts as will in a great degree be ſure, at future periods, to be repeated: their conſequences therefore in the former inſtances will enable us to prognoſticate what they will be in the latter; and as the beſt part of wiſdom is conſtituted by experience, ſo the ſtudy of hiſtory renders us wiſe by encreaſing it. But if that of a particular country produces ſuch an effect, much more does that of the world in general. Scarcely a new opinion or practice becomes prevalent in one nation, but it excites imitators in another. Now he that has ſuch general

neral knowledge, derived from this ſource, will be as much ſuperior to him who is deficient in it, as the extenſive *traveller* is to him, who has been all his life confined at home. Nay remarkable events, wherever they happen, have the ſame effect on contiguous countries, as a pebble thrown into the water: the at firſt narrow circle expands itſelf more and more over the ſurface, and at laſt reaches its utmoſt limits. What an opportunity then does the ſtudy of general hiſtory afford of acquainting ourſelves with thoſe conſpicuous facts which have illuſtrated the annals of the world! How enriched the underſtanding that is abundantly ſtored with the knowledge of them! How delighted the attention that is frequently employed in meditating upon them! For if to have an intimate acquaintance with the phænomena of nature is highly agreeable, much more ſo is it to have a clear comprehenſion of thoſe events which gave riſe to kingdoms and empires, or accelerated their fall; which influenced the founder of a ſtate, or weighed with the legiſlator; which eſtabliſhed the reputation of the conqueror, or precipitated the ruin of his rival. Indeed this ſpecies of hiſtory, ſtiled general, has at length become ſo acceptable, as to have given birth

to another kind, not entirely diſſimilar, which pretends not merely to relate facts, but to aſſign their cauſes; which, as far as it ſucceeds, muſt be highly agreeable to the reader, as well as honourable to the writer; ſince to know facts themſelves is an eminent degree of knowledge; but to be acquainted likewiſe with their cauſes, renders it at once both ſatisfactory and complete.

The Scripture is in part, and in ſome reſpects, a general hiſtory. It relates events moſt important; the creation, deſtruction, and renovation of the world: it predicts the final fate that is to conſume it, and announces the new heavens and the new earth which are afterwards to ſucceed. Its firſt book contains the hiſtory of the antediluvian world, and the tranſactions of mankind ere they were diſtinguiſhed into tribes, or diſperſed, as nations, over the face of the earth; and though it principally conſiſts of the hiſtory of a particular people, yet were *they*, by ſome way or other, as allies, ſubjects, or captives, connected with all the moſt conſpicuous nations that have appeared from the beginning of time. Nay, if aſſigning the cauſes of the moſt material events renders it ſo, it is likewiſe a philoſophical hiſtory; ſince it is copious in dwelling on

cauſes

cauſes not only ſuch as are human, but alſo ſuch as are divine. It repreſents the ſupreme Being as the remote, if not the immediate cauſe of all events; deſcribes him as intent upon this end, the puniſhment of the wicked, and the remuneration of the righteous; and declares that he combines all events in this world, ſo that they may tend to the introduction of a better, and of an heavenly ſtate, for which the preſent ſufferings of his elect but the more effectually prepare and qualify them.

Well were it if all other hiſtories were employed in inveſtigating, and in deſcanting upon the ſame cauſes, and in exemplifying their apparent effects. What encouragement to virtue would thence enſue! What abaſhment of vice! But this would not be gratifying to the rich, the powerful, the luxurious. The general cry againſt ſuch a writer would be, "In "thus ſaying thou reproveſt us;" nay, the authors being, as they commonly are, vicious and depraved, by writing in the cauſe of virtue and religion, they would reprove themſelves. It were indeed leſs blameable in them, and attended with leſs injury to mankind, were they to content themſelves with paſſing over, unnoticed, what is againſt their preſent intereſt or inclination; but having felt the re-

ſtraints of Revelation diſagreeable and burthenſome to themſelves, and known that they were ſo to others, they are led to imagine, that if neglecting it would in ſome degree promote their profit and popularity, reviling, contemning, and miſrepreſenting it, would advance them more.

Hence they combine in attacking the writings which contain it, in the moſt impious and illiberal manner; and take advantage of the loweſt and moſt ſpecious arts to degrade them. Being clothed and conveyed in a ſtile and manner different from modern, and profeſſedly hiſtorical works, they accuſe it of not attending to rules which it never preſcribed to itſelf; and which, when many parts of it were conſigned to writing, were not yet invented. They attribute errors to the original, which can only be aſcribed to the tranſlation; being delivered down in a language not generally underſtood, they miſquote, miſapply, and garble paſſages as it beſt ſuits their purpoſe; and from inattention to the cuſtoms, or manners, of the times in which theſe books were written, they repreſent things as ridiculous, which only appear ſo becauſe different from preſent uſage and modern practice. As to the aſſignment of cauſes, far from recurring

recurring to the firſt and ſupreme, their principal pains are employed in entirely excluding all conſideration of him. Inſtead of inveſting him with an irreſiſtible controul over ſecond cauſes, they never ſeem ſo highly gratified, as when they can repreſent *them* as independent of, and entirely effectual without, him. They attribute that to human counſels, which could only be the reſult of divine Wiſdom, and elevate partial into complete cauſes; as if the ſubordinate could produce their effect, without the command or permiſſion of the prime and principal.

Yet is the Scripture the power of God to make us wiſe unto Salvation; his word will ſtand the teſt of examination, criticiſm, ſound learning. The aſſignment of cauſes in other writings is at beſt ſuſpicious, ſince though thoſe of recent tranſactions may be diſcovered from collateral circumſtances, or from ſtill exiſting inſtruments of information; yet what ingenuity, or application, can poſſeſs themſelves of all the documents neceſſary to inveſtigate the cauſes of events in very diſtant periods? This knowledge therefore, like all others which contribute to human vanity, is built on very ſlight and uncertain foundations. Not ſo that which is derived from the Scripture;

ture; whatever *that* aſſigns as the cauſe of any event, may be depended upon as being actually ſo. Its reflexions come home to every man's boſom; unleſs we make it a rule of conduct, we ſhall not only be unwiſe, but miſerable: it aſſorts with every dictate of right reaſon and prudence; and to act in contradiction to it is not merely folly, but madneſs.

And if the writings of the Old Teſtament *ſingly* were ſuppoſed able to make the reader wiſe unto ſalvation, ſo muſt thoſe, in a more eminent degree, of the New alſo. It was certainly the former to which St. Paul aſcribes ſuch a power in his Epiſtle to Timothy; yet we muſt ſuppoſe that he had reſpect likewiſe to the additions and improvements made to it by the Goſpel, although the Canon of Scripture was not completed, nor the writings of the new yet joined to the old, at the time when this Epiſtle was written. And indeed it equally concerns us to defend the truth of both Covenants; nor is one jot or tittle of the law to be given up as of dubious or ſuſpicious authority; for if Revelation may be falſe in one inſtance, it may in all, and thus forfeit every claim to veracity. Whatever ſeeming difficulties therefore, or inconſiſtencies appear in either, muſt be reſolved into the error of the copyiſts,

copyiſts, or aſcribed to a ſtill imperfect acquaintance with the learned languages: but theſe difficulties daily diſappear, as we make greater proficiency in theſe ſtudies. The obſcurities indeed are not immediately diſpelled, that we may be encouraged to proceed, by meeting ſucceſs proportioned to our application; and by the breaking in upon us, as we advance, of brighter and ſtill brighter rays of light.

Yet with how little ſhow of reaſon the Scriptures are accuſed of being falſe or unfounded, will appear from reflecting, that, notwithſtanding the conſtant attempts to invalidate their authority, they ſtill continue to conſtitute the firm and immoveable baſis of hiſtoric truth. Notwithſtanding the vain endeavours of nations, moſt remote from the country where the events they record are ſaid to have happened, or otherwiſe moſt enlightened, to conceal it, ſtill traditions, ſeemingly moſt national and peculiar to them, may be traced to the ſacred writings as to their genuine ſource; an application to *them* removes the veil from whatever is myſterious in their ceremonies, unintelligible in their mythology, and extravagant in their pretenſions to antiquity. The main principles of revealed religion,

gion, the moſt genuine accounts of the origin and creation of the world and its firſt inhabitants, though derived from the Scripture, yet being to be found, ſomewhat disfigured indeed, almoſt throughout the univerſe, as well atteſt the truth of the doctrine that all mankind are deſcended from a ſingle individual, as ſpeak the extenſive and nearly univerſal diſſemination of theſe traditions; which, like the grand properties of magnetiſm and electricity in nature, pervade the whole maſs of human intellect, eſpecially when it is poliſhed by attrition, as it were, and its energies are awakened by ſociety and civilization.

The Jews were ſelected by the Almighty for the expreſs purpoſe of preſerving, for a time, among themſelves, the records of divine Revelation, and that afterwards they might be the means of communicating them to mankind in general. Their being at length rendered ſubjects to the Romans, muſt have ſufficiently acquainted that great and renowned people with their tenets and pretenſions. The hiſtory of the Roman, together with that of the latter Greek or Conſtantinopolitan empire, ere it was ſubdued by the Turks, comprehends a period of above two thouſand years; a portion of time equal to a third part of the age of the

the world. Records ſo copious, ſo antient, ſo extenſive, conſtitute of themſelves a kind of general, as well as a conſiderable ſhare of particular hiſtory, ſince the Romans were, by ſome means or other, connected with moſt of the then diſcovered nations; nay, but for the conqueſts of the former, the latter had been ſcarcely known beyond the limits of their own country. But the Roman empire, in its riſe and decline, as well witneſſed as partook in moſt of the important and intereſting events that appeared on the theatre of the univerſe; it ſaw the ſun of ſcience ſlowly attain its meridian, and afterwards rapidly ſet in the long night of barbariſm and ignorance: as it advanced, it obſerved the birth of the Chriſtian Religion, its eſtabliſhment, its corruption; and thoſe who fled from that empire when tottering to its fall, partly contributed, by their ſucceſsful labours, in the revival and more extenſive communication of learning, to its ſubſequent reformation. Here then, namely in the hiſtory of that nation, and particularly of its decline, was a wide field for infidel writers to diſſeminate their doubts, and inſinuate their ſuſpicions; ſupporting them from authors, many of whoſe works are by this time nearly antiquated, and in reading which few would

would poſſeſs the patience and application neceſſary to purſue and confute them. Yet ſome, animated by a laudable zeal, have followed them, and with conſiderable effect; and whoever ſhall afterwards ſucceed them in the ſame career, will continue to deſerve well of mankind, and of our common Chriſtianity, and they may fairly promiſe themſelves that their labours will be equally uſeful; for the errors already detected afford a fair preſumption that thoſe which yet remain are capable of as eaſy a ſolution.

Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, likewiſe, is infinitely involved with the other ſpecies; but the writers partaking of the diſadvantages of the times in which they lived, and being moſtly ſecluded and ſequeſtered from the buſier ſcenes of life, are not to be compared either in matter or ſtile with thoſe of civil hiſtory. Indeed if the latter contains the vices or crimes of mankind, the former is ſwelled with the records of their folly and madneſs: ſo diligent, however, is evil, that accuſations againſt Chriſtianity are eagerly ſought after, and produced from thence, yet with what ſhew of reaſon may appear from reflecting that few are capable of eſtimating their force, and fewer, if they could, are likely to be at the trouble of rendering

rendering themſelves completely maſters of the ſubject. Until we are ſo, we muſt be content to believe thoſe who have made it the ſole and immediate object of their ſtudies, when they inform us, that the objections againſt Revelation, as drawn from Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, are ſuch as very unfairly attribute the vices of Chriſtians to Chriſtianity itſelf; that it is charged with enormities which it never authorized, but conſtantly condemned; and that that is required from its commencement, and from its progreſſional ſtate, which can only be expected at the period of its completion; namely, that folly and wickedneſs ſhould be no more, and that unerring wiſdom and perfect virtue ſhould immediately appear.

When treating on general, and particularly on Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, what ſhall we ſay of thee, Hypatia? The paragon of Heathen virtue and excellence, the conſtant theme of all ſucceeding writers, when deſirous of degrading and of depreciating Chriſtianity; whom the mob of Alexandria, in their blind zeal, cruelly and inhumanly deſtroyed. Such as thou waſt, we lament that thou waſt not ours: if thou canſt at preſent be ſuppoſed ſenſible of revenge, thou haſt it in the indelible ſtain fixed by a few ferocious individuals

on

on our profeſſion; if forgiveneſs can be yielded to ſuch an atrocity, and oblivion be ſuffered to bury it for ever, ſurely it might be granted in conſequence of the grief, regret, and remorſe of every ſympathizing Chriſtian who reads the ſtory. Our religion may perhaps boaſt of daughters equally virtuous, but of none ſo accompliſhed, and at the ſame time ſo unfortunate. Yet thy unhappy fate is a proof, that the character of a religion is not to be taken from a ſingle inſtance or two, but from its general effect in improving the manners and in promoting the happineſs of mankind. It evinces the neceſſity of ſomething more than human to ſubdue corruptions ſo rooted, and diſpoſitions ſo depraved; it diſcourages all proſpects of perfection here, and teaches us to expect it only when God ſhall finally ſelect his jewels, rejecting ſuch as are falſe and fictitious, and reſerving only thoſe of pure and genuine luſtre.

To reſcue then the Scripture and our common religion from the cavils and miſrepreſentations of ſome popular writers, is my deſign in theſe Lectures; in which, as to ſucceed, is moſt honourable, ſo to fail would perhaps not be entirely diſgraceful, ſince the intent would in ſome degree apologiſe for the execution. It were likewiſe deſirable that the minds of the younger

younger part of the preſent audience eſpecially were rendered duly ſenſible of the dangerous deſigns of ſuch authors; and to this nothing could more contribute than a ſuitable expoſure of their various errors, ſubterfuges, and inconſiſtencies. Be it farther obſerved, that thoſe evils are thus ſtated in the only place capable of effectually remedying them; for our ſituation naturally exempts us from the temptations which tend to produce vain, frivolous, and irreligious writings. Enjoying from the liberality of others a limited, yet philoſophical, competence, the improvement of reaſon being one principal end of our ſtudies, trained and nurtured from our very youth to the hopes and expectations afforded by religion, we can have no inclination to ſeduce, deceive, or to corrupt others, and undermine, at the ſame time, their temporal and eternal intereſts. Nay, it is incumbent on us not only to diſcourage the deſigns of thoſe who are buſy in depriving men of the hopes of ſalvation, but alſo to exert ourſelves to the utmoſt in oppoſing and counteracting them, as well by confirming thoſe in their pious reſolutions, who adhere to the Goſpel, as in recalling thoſe to it who have miſerably departed from and deſerted it: *this*, love to our ſpecies, reſpect

for our religion, and gratitude to our benefactors, moſt loudly demands from us. And, indeed, this place has never been deficient in producing advocates in the cauſe of Truth. The moſt learned of our members have always been moſt religious. [a] One particularly is alluded to, that others may follow; an example in all reſpects ſo conſpicuous, who died as a Chriſtian ſhould, in the act of devotion, on his knees, and with his face towards heaven; who, after having been tinctured with all ſcience, and having acquired almoſt every language, antient, modern, particularly the oriental, was known to declare, that, after all his moſt extenſive reſearches, he found the Bible the beſt book, moſt inſtructive, moſt important, moſt worthy of the attention of mankind in general, and of ſcholars in particular. To excite defenders of theſe writings, as well as opponents to their adverſaries, ſeems to have been the intent of the pious Founder of this Lecture; and being ſuch, there is none of ſober conſideration but muſt be ſatisfied with its ſupport, and rejoice in its continuance.

[a] Sir William Jones.

SERMON

SERMON II.

MARK xiv. 59.

But neither ſo did their witneſs agree together.

A LOVE of ſingularity, and a proſpect of advantage, have generally produced immoral and licentious writers: but whence are mankind ſo prone to approve and admire their writings? Alas! it is becauſe they coincide with their vicious propenſities, and, for a time at leaſt, juſtify them to themſelves. Of this none took more advantage than a foreign writer [b], highly celebrated for his labours in the walk of general hiſtory, of which ſo much has been ſaid in the preceding diſcourſe; and though it may ſeem indecorous to call in queſtion the reputation of the dead, yet authors may be eſteemed alive while their works are

[b] Voltaire.

ſo; at leaſt, if depraved, the miſchief which they occaſion ſurvives them to a period beyond all poſſible calculation. The ſtatement then of the errors and miſrepreſentations of ſuch literary productions as tend to corrupt the morals, and conſequently to undermine the happineſs of mankind, though it may be conſidered as an oblique accuſation of the authors, yet is it, in reality, the defence of all that is good, important, and valuable.

Nay after all, to a certain degree the merits of this extraordinary writer muſt be acknowledged. Few or none ever poſſeſſed abilities ſo various, talents ſo engaging, and a vivacity ſo inexhauſtible. In modern hiſtory the pre-eminence to all others would be particularly appropriate to him, were his authorities to be depended upon, or his veracity equal to the fertility of his genius, or to the brilliancy of his imagination.

An acute reaſoner[c] has reduced to a few propoſitions, at moſt four, all that is neceſſary to evince the truth of Chriſtianity, and to remove the doubts of the ſincere, but ſcrupulous. Something ſimilar is intended with reſpect to this ſo popular an author; and if,

[c] Leſlie.

from

from a few ſpecimens, it ſhall appear that he was remarkably deficient in that which conſtitutes the character of a faithful, judicious, and legitimate hiſtorian, we may fairly argue from what we know to what we do not, and beſtow leſs attention, when we next read them, upon his calumnies againſt Chriſtianity; nay very rationally ſuſpect our judgment, when we ſhall be inclined implicitly to confide in him, and to honour him with unqualified and unlimited approbation.

Cruelty is a diſpoſition incompatible with a juſt conception of the Deity; only the weak and wicked, not the good and powerful, are ſo: yet this author has preſumed to inſinuate ſuch an accuſation againſt the Father of Mercies himſelf: and this he builds as well on the general[d] ſpirit of the Jewiſh polity, as on ſome particular national meaſures in obedience to it. The earlier ages of the world, ere ſcience was matured, and refinement and civilization were known, neceſſarily ſanctioned their laws with greater ſeverity than thoſe who are ſoftened by long eſtabliſhed ſocial intercourſe, humanized by the exerciſe of mild and courteous manners, and who have been trained

[d] Vid. Lettres de quelques Juifs, p. 22.

under the guardian care of a judicious and approved education. The character of invaders too, in which the Jews were at firſt conſpicuous, rendered them more ferocious, than thoſe who have for a conſiderable time enjoyed peaceable and unconteſted poſſeſſions. But as to the acts of ſeeming cruelty recorded as taking place in conſequence of the immediate command of God, they muſt be reſolved into the neceſſary meaſures of the Theocracy, as well for the preſervation of internal order, as to prevent external dangers. Thus in every wiſe government cruelty, as it may appear towards a few guilty individuals, is mercy to the public at large. Thus the retaliation was juſt, when thoſe who had contaminated the boſom of the earth with innocent blood, were themſelves to be extirpated: and thus as Agag's ſword had rendered women childleſs, the divine Juſtice cauſed that, by the ſignal vengeance inflicted on him by the hand of Samuel, his mother alſo ſhould be childleſs among women.

[e] Except in theſe, and perhaps a few other inſtances, we may venture to pronounce, that even the Revelation to the Jews is replete

[e] Ibidem, p. 32.

with

with mercy, benevolence, and compaſſion. They were not enjoined ſuch barbarous rites as human ſacrifices, according to our author's confident aſſertion, any more than criminals executed in the preſent day can be ſaid to be ſacrificed: ſuch offerings indeed are the very crimes for the puniſhment of which they were commiſſioned by the Almighty to ſuperſede the idolatrous nations of Canaan. Neither is it true that every thing devoted to the ſervice of God was ſacrificed. The cattle certainly might bleed upon the altar [f]: not ſo the men and women; they were only reſerved for the menial offices of the Temple. Indeed the Jewiſh code enjoins the greateſt moderation in the uſe of victory; it ſtrengthens and ſecures what has ſince been conſidered as the law of nature and of nations. The manifeſto of Jephtha, for inſtance, ere he attacked the Midianites, is a model for all who ſhould hereafter find themſelves in a ſimilar ſituation. The reception, particularly, that is commanded to be given to ſtrangers; the attention ſhewn by the Jewiſh law to the very cattle, and even to the trees of a conquered country, are but

[f] Ibidem, p. 316.

ſo many traits of mercy, exhibited in their policy; and which ſpeak the divine Author patient, benevolent, plenteous in mercy and compaſſion.

But thoſe who enjoy the confeſſedly milder revelation through Chriſt, cannot complain, becauſe it follows another neceſſarily more ſevere; ſince as to them the latter is ſet aſide, and become nearly obſolete; neither would they have conſidered the objections againſt it, as far as the accuſation of cruelty is concerned, as in any degree affecting them, had they duly attended to the ſubject, nor been miſled by the deſultory and ſuperficial remarks of profane and irreligious authors.

[g] With his uſual alertneſs the writer at preſent under conſideration aſks, "is nature "changed ſince its origin; or to what elſe ſhall "we attribute the pretended power of magi-"cians to charm even ſerpents, as we are told "they could, in the Jewiſh writings?" No; nature is not changed, nor are there now wanting thoſe that can "*handle any deadly* "*thing, and it ſhall not hurt them*;" and that not by divine interference, but through cauſes

[g] Ibidem, p. 339.

merely

merely natural. It is well known that there is an herb [h] growing in moſt quarters of the globe, that, if applied, can endue men with this power. There is therefore no occaſion for any change of nature for that purpoſe; and the queſtion of our author is as impertinent as it is ill-founded.

[i] The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, ſays he, "were metamorphoſed into a lake of "brimſtone; as was the wife of Lot into a "pillar of ſalt, and Nebuchadnezar into a "bull." But were ſuch metamorphoſes confined only to the times of the Scripture? Do not Africa, Aſia, Sicily, Italy, by dreadful tokens, and more recent examples, ſhew that hurricanes, volcanos, earthquakes, lightning, can convert animals into ſtones, and cities into lakes of fire? As to Nebuchadnezar, it is true, we read that he was deprived of his reaſon; but that he was converted into a bull, we are at a loſs to diſcover. This may be ridicule; but where it is unſuitably introduced, it recoils upon the profane author; as in this caſe it indiſputably does.

[h] Ariſtolochia Anquiceda.
[i] Lettres de quelques Juifs, p. 342, 343.

"*Wilt*

[k] "*Wilt thou not poſſeſs that which Chemoſh "thy God giveth thee?*" ſaid Jephtha to the King of the Amorites. Here, obſerves our author, is an inſtance of a Jewiſh leader acknowledging another God, beſides the true. How ſo? Is it uncommon to argue with a man on his own principles, and for a moment to ſuppoſe that true which one knows to be falſe? This is all that Jephtha does on this occaſion; and no great advantage to the cauſe of infidelity can be derived from it.

Our author in another place proceeds thus: When Naaman the idolater[l] demanded of Elijah, whether it were allowed him to enter the Temple with his maſter, and to worſhip the idol there with him, the Prophet only anſwered, Go in peace.

On which ſtatement we can only obſerve, that he could be no longer an idolater, when he entered after this tranſaction into the Temple; ſince he is now ſuppoſed formally to renounce ſuch a falſe kind of religion. As to worſhipping the idol, that is ſuperadded, no expreſſion of that ſort being to be found in the Scripture; and as to the Prophet's permiſſion, that can by no force be extended be-

[k] Ibidem, p. 250. [l] Ibid. p. 335.

yond

yond the performance of his duty, as an attendant on the royal perſon.

[m] The books of the Jewiſh Scripture, being the oldeſt extant, have ſuffered much from mutilation; and being written in a language only confined to the learned, are liable to be miſinterpreted. Hear our author's obſervation on this ſubject! "You ought to know "that all the books of the Jewiſh Scripture "were neceſſary to the world; for how could "the ſupreme Being inſpire uſeleſs books? If "then they were neceſſary, how came they "to be loſt or mutilated?" But is one obliged to allow that all the books of the Jewiſh Scripture were neceſſary to the world? This nobody has ever advanced, or even imagined, except himſelf.

Beſides, muſt books be always neceſſary, and to the whole world, to render it probable that God ſhould inſpire their authors? May not ſome be uſeful at certain times, and to particular perſons, and yet be not unworthy of being dictated by God? Beſides, can any one prove that the writings now loſt were not uſeful at the time, and to the perſons for whom they were compoſed?

[m] Ibid. p. 379.

There

There is likewiſe a diſtinction to be made between being uſeful and being neceſſary; being uſeful to the world, and to ſome certain perſons. To confound theſe terms is not to reaſon accurately; and it had been as well perhaps, had our author pointed out ſuch books as are counterfeit. Surely none eſteemed canonical are ſo, unleſs he aſſigns to the term counterfeit a meaning very different from the common.

[n] This judgment too of the Jewiſh writings is hazarded by one in no degree converſant with the originals; elſe would he not have made the comment he has upon the prophecy of Malachi, *for* [o] *from the riſing of the ſun even to the going down of the ſame my name is great among the Gentiles, and incenſe is offered to it; for my name is great among the Gentiles.* So it runs in moſt tranſlations, and our author objects to it accordingly, as being inconſiſtent with truth: yet the difficulty is removed in the Engliſh Bible, by ſubſtituting the words *ſhall be*, for the term *is*; and this is warranted by the genius of the Hebrew language, which often expreſſes the future by the preſent.

[n] Ibid. p. 332. [o] Mal. i. 11.

He

[p] He revives likewiſe the ſtale objection, that the Almighty threatens, in the Jewiſh Scriptures, *to viſit the ſins of the fathers upon the children*; but this has been often defended and vindicated, ſince it is not the *ordinary* method of God's proceeding: he only acts thus when the ſon perſiſts in the father's wickedneſs; for, according to the general rule of God's juſtice, the wickedneſs of the wicked reſts in its conſequences upon him, as the righteouſneſs of the righteous does upon him.

"*I gave them ſtatutes that were not good*" —how incompatible this, remarks our author, with the divine clemency, wiſdom, or juſtice! But theſe bad ſtatutes, as they are called, are merely given them becauſe they did not obey the good; by way of reproach only; as after having forſaken the true God, they are directed to have recourſe for aid to falſe deities. Nor are they literally ſtatutes, but figuratively ſo: they were really war, famine, peſtilence, captivity; the ſevere and awakening leſſons which God may very rationally be ſuppoſed to introduce after milder and more lenient have failed.

[p] Vide Lettres de quelques Juifs, p. 344.
[q] Ibid. p. 346. Ezek. xx. 25.

Proceed

Proceed we now to more extravagant errors, ſcarcely compatible with common ſenſe, much leſs with ſuperior and brilliant abilities; were it not uſual with divine Providence to make fooliſh the wiſdom of the wiſe when oppoſed to him; to render even diviners mad, and to entrap the wicked in their own wickedneſs.

[r] "The cherubims," ſays he, "are put into "the ark;" than which what could be a more egregious or ignorant miſtake? How would a ſimilar one, in another writer, have excited his ſovereign contempt, and his ingenious ridicule! The ark was a cheſt two cubits high, and a cubit and an half broad; but the cherubims of Solomon were ten cubits high, and meaſuring from wing to wing ten cubits alſo wide: they therefore *ſtood* upon the ark; but it was impoſſible, ſuch being their reſpective dimenſions, to put them into it.

[s] He likewiſe taxes the author of the book of Wiſdom with a deſertion of truth, when he thus wrote with reſpect to Joſeph, and the divine Wiſdom that conducted him: "*When* "*the righteous was ſold, ſhe forſook him not*; "*but delivered him from ſin; ſhe went down* "*with him into the pit, and left him not in*

[r] Ibid. p. 361.

[s] Ibidem, p. 367.

"*bonds*

" *bonds till ſhe brought him the ſceptre of the* " *kingdom*[t]." Here, ſays our author, according to this deſcription he muſt have ſupplanted Pharaoh; which was not actually the caſe. Now the original muſt mean by the ſceptre, no more one appropriated to a king, than an enſign of delegated authority: ſuch were common in the Eaſt, as they are among us. By ſuch a way of reaſoning, the ſame writer might infer that a provincial magiſtrate, becauſe preceded by a mace, was an emperor, or that a judge or chancellor, becauſe attended with the ſame emblem of power, was a king.

Your patience is requeſted, while ſome of our author's manifeſt and palpable contradictions are introduced[u]. He endeavours to diſprove the Pentateuch; that is, denies its being written by the acknowledged author, becauſe the art of writing in his time was not yet known by the Jews, or by any other people; yet in a different place, ſpeaking of Sanchoniathon, he ſays, " that his age was contempo- " rary with the latter years of Moſes; but the " former confeſſes one part of his hiſtory to be " taken from Thot, who flouriſhed eight hun- " dred years before the time of Moſes." Thus

[t] Wiſdom x. 13, 14.

[u] Ibid. p. 99.

he

he proceeds. "This declaration is one of the "moſt curious that antiquity has left us, ſince "it proves the uſe of alphabets eight hundred "years before the time of Moſes." What, then, were they known ſo long before him, yet unknown at the time he wrote the Pentateuch? Was ever contradiction more glaring and obvious?

The writers, whom the ſame author quotes in ſupport of his objections, affirm, according to him, "that at the time of Moſes they wrote "on ſtone, on lead, and on wood." He himſelf further declares, "that the Chaldæans engraved "their obſervations upon brick," apparently while it was yet ſoft; "and the Egyptians *their* "writings upon marble and upon wood." According then to theſe his writers, and according to himſelf in another place, ſtone was not the only material on which they wrote. But the cauſing of books to be engraved on ſtone, becauſe they could not otherwiſe be made, is a contradiction in itſelf; for if Joſhua, for inſtance, had dictated to the engravers every word, he muſt have been endued with patience ſcarcely credible. In that caſe, to have diminiſhed the trouble, it had been preferable to engrave them himſelf. That he did this, is not ſo much as pretended; but if the engravers

gravers worked after a copy, that copy muſt have been impreſſed upon ſome other material, contrary to the hypotheſis that there was no other.

Indeed it is needleſs for him to appeal to other writers to atteſt the truth of his aſſertions, ſince, whenever he wants authorities, he makes them. Yet one there is, namely, Luitbrand, the licentious Biſhop of Cremona, whoſe abominable calumnies he propagates, and whoſe ill-founded aſſertions he ſtill repeats (if indeed the works that bear the name of that Prelate are actually his), particularly his account of the [w] infamous Marozia, and of the Prelates of the Church ſaid to be deſcended from her. The See of Rome is indeed expoſed to reproach enough, and juſtly too, for her real errors, and ſhameful deviations from the purity of the Goſpel, without loading her with unmerited cenſure. Yet our author has not the ingenuouſneſs to acknowledge the *inſufficiency* of his materials, and that the writer from whom he derived his information was held in ſuch low eſteem, as well by his contemporaries as by thoſe who ſubſequently treated of the ſame ſubject, that they rather

[w] Hiſt. Gen.

choſe to neglect, than attend to communications in all reſpects ſo little worthy of belief or confidence.

His calculations, a ſpecimen or two of which it is intended to exhibit, are as inaccurate as his other arguments are inconſiſtent and inconcluſive.

Our author [x] ſuppoſes the prey taken from the Midianites, whether men or cattle, as mentioned in Scripture, to be more than the country could produce or ſupport. But allowing his meaſure juſt, namely about an hundred ſquare miles, yet the capability of a country to produce corn or cattle, depends more on the ſkill and induſtry of the inhabitants than on its extent: beſides, both calculation and experience atteſt that it is poſſible for the ſame quantity of land both to exhibit ſuch a population, and to maintain ſuch a ſtock of cattle, as is attributed to it in Scripture. But that he was probably miſtaken as to the dimenſions, may be inferred from his actually confounding it with another country, of indiſputably larger extent: for thus in a different work he proceeds. How ungrateful was it in Moſes, after having received ſignal ſervices

[x] Vide Lettres de quelques Juifs, p. 263.

from

from the High-prieſt of Midian, after having been admitted to the honour of marrying his daughter, and having been guided through the deſart by his ſon, in return for ſo much kindneſs to devote the Midianites to deſtruction! But the truth is, the Midianites, among whom Jethro was High-prieſt, and thoſe whom Moſes conſigned to plunder, were different people. One lived near the lake Aſphaltites, the other on the Red Sea. Thoſe belonging to Jethro deſcended from Midian, the ſon of Chus; the other from Abraham, by Keturah. The former retained ſome knowledge of the true God; ſince we read of Jethro's offering ſacrifices to him. This reproach of his, therefore, againſt Moſes, is without foundation; and from this manifeſt miſtake with reſpect to the two countries, we may judge of his calculations in other inſtances, and may be convinced that, notwithſtanding his cavils, the aſſertion of the Scripture, with reſpect to the population and number of cattle, is accurate and juſt.

[y] The wealth left by David to Solomon, the immenſe profit returned from the merchandize ſent to Ophir, all in their turn fall under our

[y] Ibid. p. 292.

author's critical ſarcaſm. According to modern, or rather European ideas, ſuch profits may indeed appear extraordinary; but not under an abſolute or Aſiatic government. It is well known, that commerce at its infancy, or where a new ſource of it is opened, is attended with returns moſt aſtoniſhing; and this was probably the caſe in antient, as it certainly is in modern times.

Ere we part from this celebrated writer, it will be neceſſary to revive one accuſation to which he is particularly obnoxious, which is moſt ſubverſive of his own reputation, moſt prejudicial to his readers, and in its conſequences moſt alarming to the cauſe of morality and religion; namely, his frequent, and indeed diſguſting violation of decency and decorum. Providence ſeems to have fixed on this author, and his too numerous imitators, ſuch an obvious and apparent ſtigma, that all of any dignity of character, or purity of ſentiment, might thence diſcern how much their writings tend to debaſe human nature, and might avoid them accordingly. Thoſe who read frivolous and licentious writings for amuſement only, and to beguile the time which they find oppreſſive, are leſs to be lamented, if through them they become the victims of corruption; though it might be wiſhed,

wiſhed, that, even in this inſtance, innocence might be preſerved. But when thoſe whoſe aim is intellectual improvement, and who ſeek it in the delightful walks of general hiſtory, find thoſe reptile ſentiments of impiety and indecency croſs their way, even ſhould they eſcape their venom, the circumſtance muſt ſtrike them with horror and diſmay. For to this our author, it is principally to be aſcribed, that ſucceeding writers, ſeemingly remote from the temptation, are not ſatisfied with being immoral and profane, unleſs they are likewiſe indecent and licentious; ſo that purity of manners, the firſt and beſt effect of education, is never ſufficiently ſecured, ſince the very books recommended to the riſing generation, for promoting and preſerving it, only tend to debauch and corrupt them more.

To follow this celebrated author through all his publications, would require works of equal magnitude and multiplicity with his own; not that a portion of an hour, but that a whole life were devoted to that purpoſe. However it is hoped that enough has been ſaid to evince that he is what himſelf has pronounced concerning a rival writer, "one who "quotes falſely, whoſe authorities are not to "be depended upon, and who is ready, with

" equal ſincerity, to take either ſide of the " queſtion;" and that not the witneſſes againſt our Saviour were, in their atteſtations, more inconſiſtent with each other, than is that eminent writer, in his attacks upon the Scriptures, at variance with himſelf.

Nor let it be objected, that not all that has been produced on this occaſion is for the firſt time urged and inſiſted upon. The aim here is not oſtentation, but uſe. New arguments, like green wood, may yield and ſtart; but the old, like ſeaſoned rafters, as well ſtrengthen as ſupport the building. Yet perhaps it has not been before obſerved how very differently the latter part of the life of an hero of his own time and country, is deſcribed by our author and by his biographer. By the former, the decline of that extraordinary man is repreſented as marked with no remains of the once illuſtrious Condé[z], but what muſt have occaſioned regret at the ruin of ſo great a man. By the latter he is deſcribed as ſpending the evening of his life in the boſom of friendſhip, amidſt the comforts and conſolations of domeſtic and literary converſation, and as cloſing his career of earthly fame with hopes of more perma-

[z] Hiſtoire Générale.

nent

nent glory in the heavens *which fadeth not away*. The exemplary death of ſuch extraordinary men inſtructs, convinces, confirms poſterity in exhibiting conſtancy in the faith, particularly in the laſt and moſt trying hour; and had our author concluded his exiſtence with an exit ſo reſigned, ſo dignified, with expectations ſo full of immortality, even his impious doctrines had been ſomewhat countenanced by it. But the reverſe was actually the caſe; for if the accounts are true, of all the horrid departures from life, none were ever equal to that of Voltaire; in fearful apprehenſion of judgment, and in extreme deſpair. But at that time he only could reflect on the ſpeculative, not practical conſequences of his publiſhed opinions. Could he have imagined but half the evils that have ſince reſulted from their being adopted as a rule of conduct, to the ſubverſion of all law, order, and religion, it muſt have ſharpened the thorns with which his death-bed was planted, and added tenfold to the agonies of his alarmed and diſtracted conſcience. The pernicious conſequences of theſe writings, then, are ſufficient to warrant us in making them the particular ſubject of our animadverſion, and to vindicate the Miniſters of the Goſpel as well in expoſing the

weakneſs and wickedneſs of the principles which are built upon them, as in pointing out the malignity and malevolence of thoſe who are buſy in encouraging and diſſeminating them; leſt they *who have turned the whole world upſide down*, ſhould haply be induced, in the plenitude of fury and devaſtation, *to come here alſo*.

SERMON III.

2 Cor. iii. 4.

For while one ſaith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?

ST. Paul aſks the queſtion; and if it might be addreſſed to thoſe who were in ſome ſort ſpiritual; to thoſe who followed really evangelical teachers, yet who rather choſe to be called after *them*, than after Chriſt, much more is it applicable to thoſe who betray ſtronger ſymptoms of being carnal, and who are ſeduced and deceived by falſe ones. For the vain, the intemperate, the ambitious, have always been as eager to enſlave the mind as the body; ſince influence on the former generally leads to complete empire over the latter, and the poſſeſſion of all that belongs to it. But to promote ſuch wicked purpoſes, it is often expedient to oppoſe long eſtabliſhed opinions, and to ſubvert antient uſages by the introduction

introduction of ſtrange and novel doctrines. Thus various alterations are propoſed in bodies politic, and new modes even of religion are ſuggeſted, ſeemingly for the general good, but really to anſwer particular intereſted views. In purſuance of the ſame plan it is, that faith itſelf is combated by opinion, and reaſon and revelation are ſet at variance. But if any doctrine more than others affords a field for ſuch attempts, it is that of the Trinity. Being confeſſedly abſtruſe and myſterious, the generality think themſelves unconcerned in its defence: it is therefore moſt expoſed to the attacks of adverſaries; in weakening and miſrepreſenting it leſs oppoſition is expected; and impious and malevolent deſigns incur leſs danger of detection. Yet notwithſtanding all attempts, ſtill it maintains its ground; and the ſeemingly capital objections have been ſo ably anſwered, that, if what has been ſaid by its learned defenders ſhall be generally retained in memory, there is no fear of any ſurmiſes being encouraged as to the certainty of its truth, or that we ſhould ſuffer our faith to be ſhaken with reſpect to it.

[a] St. John wrote his Goſpel a conſiderable

[a] Biſhop Horſley's Tracts, p. 17.

time

time after the other Evangeliſts had completed theirs; that he might remedy their defects, and ſupply their omiſſions. He ſays, that Jeſus Chriſt is come *in* the fleſh. A modern Socinian [b], of no ordinary fame, ſuppoſes it ſhould be *of* the fleſh; but this is an alteration entirely his own, nor ſupported by the authority of any manuſcript whatever. And who ſees not the abſurdity of St. John's inſiſting ſo ſtrongly on Jeſus Chriſt's coming *in* the fleſh, had it not been in his power, as a divine perſon, to come in another way, and had not his coming in this manner been entirely voluntary? Such an expreſſion, therefore, was with great propriety applied to him, inaſmuch as he diveſted himſelf of the glory which he had with the Father ages before the world began; but his amazing condeſcenſion gave grace to the act, and infinitely enhanced the value of it.

[c] "There are three that bear record in "heaven," though a queſtionable text, yet is not ſo abſolutely neceſſary to eſtabliſh the doctrine of the Trinity, but that it is ſufficiently ſupported from other parts of Scripture

[b] Prieſtley. [c] 1 John v. 7.

without

without it. Although it be not found in *all* the exiſting manuſcripts, yet its authority cannot be entirely done away, till we are ſure that the majority of manuſcripts, as well loſt as preſerved, were without the obnoxious paſſage. In the mean time, the triumph attendant on expunging this verſe from the ſacred writings muſt be very incomplete, amidſt ſuch a cloud of other witneſſes that concur in ſupporting this important and myſterious doctrine.

It is further objected to this fundamental article of our faith [d], that it is but a revival of Platoniſm. But if a ſimilarity in this reſpect exiſt between the Goſpel and that philoſophy, it muſt reſult from the remains of antient tradition, as originally derived from Revelation, concerning the triple union in the divine nature. Though the doctrines are ſimilar, yet they are by no means the ſame; the Æons derived from the ſupreme Being, according to Plato, being inferior to him, whilſt the ſcriptural ſcheme, on the contrary, repreſents the Son equal to the Father as *touching his Godhead.* Whoever therefore deſcribes Platoniſm, particularly as far as this doctrine is concerned,

[d] Ibidem, p. 213.

as

as correſponding with Chriſtianity, betrays an ignorance of both; and as well expoſes his inability in letters, as his inſtability in faith.

The interpretation of the word *Logos*, in St. John's Goſpel, as contended for by this opponent[c] to the Trinity, is built upon his miſconception of Platoniſm. To detect therefore this error, it would be neceſſary to dwell longer in explaining that metaphyſical ſyſtem. But he has rendered this unneceſſary, by introducing, very unfortunately for himſelf, Theophilus, Biſhop of Antioch, thus ſpeaking: "It is clear that when God ſaid, Let us make "man, he ſpake to nothing but to his own "Logos, or Wiſdom;" that is, according to our opponent, to nothing but himſelf. The original paſſage in the Greek is, that he ſpake *to* his Logos, and to his Wiſdom; the ſubſtitution therefore of the disjunctive *or*, for the conjunction *and*, is, though entirely in his manner, yet unauthoriſed, and the paſſage, far from being an argument againſt, directly proves what it was intended to diſprove; ſince the Father, ſpeaking to his Logos and to his Wiſdom, can mean nothing elſe than to his Son and to his Holy Ghoſt.

[c] Ibid. p. 228.

Theſe

Theſe are ſome of the direct objections; others more oblique are ſuch as the following: "What is eaſieſt to be underſtood, is "moſt uſeful; therefore likelieſt to be re-"vealed by God, and to be moſt attractive of "human regard." But if God be, as he certainly is, of an infinitely ſuperior nature to man, is it not probable, that queſtions relating to him ſhould be more myſterious than thoſe in which only ourſelves are concerned? Nay, there are properties belonging to humanity, and even to ſeemingly moſt inconſiderable objects, beyond the power of the moſt exalted underſtanding among men entirely to explain. If ſuch difficulties accompany the conſideration of *earthly things*, how much more are they to be expected in *heavenly!* True there are ſome acknowledged obſcurities attending the doctrine of the Trinity; but ſurely not all things are ſo. Its moral purpoſes are ſufficiently obvious, and the pre-eminent value of the ſufferings of the divine nature, to atone for human offences, is too manifeſt to be inſiſted on.

It is further obſerved, that ſuch myſteries are incompatible with the very idea of a revelation; nay render it an abſurdity in terms—"For how can that be ſaid to be diſcovered, "which

" which ſtill remains concealed?" But the Goſpel is a revelation not ſolely in reſpect of the Trinity, but in relation to thoſe other important doctrines, which before its appearance had ſo long continued to be concealed from mankind; among the reſt, a reſurrection to a future ſtate either of happineſs or miſery, correſpondently to the merit or demerit of our actions in this life. Such doctrines, and the duties reſulting from them, are ſo clearly revealed in Scripture, that he who *runs may read them.* It is therefore according to the majority of its diſcoveries that the Scripture is ſaid to contain a revelation; though there may be one or two tenets, perhaps, to which that name may not be ſo ſtrictly and properly applicable.

Athanaſius, according to the author at preſent under conſideration, does not deny that the firſt Chriſtians were Unitarians. Agreed; but does this prove they were ſo? By no means. Beſides, the faith of the primitive Church enters not at all into his preſent queſtion. He is ſpeaking of the unbelieving Jews; and the reaſon aſſigned for their rejecting the Meſſiah, is their being ſo groſs as to look for no more in him whom they expected, than a mere man; but as to the Jewiſh converts,

verts, they were not at all in the view of the alledged author. The omiſſion, therefore, to aſſert that they believed in the Trinity, far from proving the firſt Chriſtians Unitarians, affords a ſurmiſe in favour of the contrary opinion: for if the Jews were to be condemned, before they were converted, for expecting in Chriſt but a mere man, they muſt have been equally ſo, had they entertained ſuch a degrading opinion of him after they were ſo.

Another argument is taken from Epiphanius's omitting to affirm that the Nazarenes, who, according to our author, "conſtituted "in a great meaſure the primitive Church," believed the doctrine of the Trinity. Now after obſerving that the Nazarenes, of whom Epiphanius ſpeaks, were not the firſt converts to Chriſtianity, but a ſect half Jew, half Chriſtian, that appeared immediately after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and whoſe opinion could be of no weight as to the primitive doctrine, let us examine what Epiphanius remarks concerning them. "I cannot ſay whether they "think him a mere man, or whether they "affirm, according to the truth, that he was "begotten of Mary by the Holy Ghoſt:" if he could, he would have done ſo; as he did not, there

there is a preſumption that they were rather of the latter and orthodox opinion, than the contrary; at leaſt we may as rationally infer the one as the other: the ſilence therefore of Epiphanius, and the ſuppoſed opinion of the Nazarenes, are either irrelevant, or prove juſt the contrary of that which they are adduced to eſtabliſh.

Theſe Nazarenes, adds our author, were Ebionites: poſſibly the latter Nazarenes were ſo, but not thoſe that in part compoſed the primitive Church; and that the latter were ſo called is an abſurd aſſertion, ſince the Ebionites were not then known as an heretical ſect, whoſe diſtinguiſhing doctrine was the unity of the divine nature, in contradiction to the Trinity.

The Apoſtles, it ſeems, taught this doctrine with great caution and circumſpection; but this is likewiſe an argument againſt all the moſt approved modes of teaching, which always proceed from the elementary to the more abſtruſe parts, *from milk to ſtrong meat:* but the apprehenſion of being detected in a falſehood, or convinced of art or cunning, was as far from the Apoſtles, as it is apparent in the adverſaries of their doctrines. No; they ſeem throughout to have been plain and ſin-

cere men; yet they had been unfit for their commiſſion, had they been unacquainted with the propereſt method of executing it.

But what ſay the opponents, particularly the grand and principal one? "What can be "a clearer proof of the ſenſe of the Scrip- "tures, than the practice of the Church? "No ſuch thing as the Trinity was believed "in the firſt or early ages of it; the ſenſe "therefore of the Scriptures muſt be per- "verted, which in after-times have been pro- "duced in its favour."

In another place he argues otherwiſe. "The "Scriptures, when properly explained, do not "ſupport the doctrine; it could not therefore "be the faith of the primitive Church." Firſt, then, becauſe it was not the doctrine of the Church, he infers that it could not be ſupported by Scripture; ſecondly, becauſe it is not, as he ſays, ſupported by Scripture, he aſſerts that it could not be the doctrine of the Church. Both proofs afford the cleareſt inſtance of that falſe way of reaſoning, which is called arguing in a circle. In the ſame way the Papiſts prove the authenticity of their Scriptures, from the ſupremacy of the Church, as they likewiſe ſupport the ſupremacy of their Church by the authority of the Scriptures.

An

An author of this perſuaſion triumphantly aſks, "What political view could be more "anſwered by tranſubſtantiation, than by the "Trinity[f]?" The queſtion might at firſt perplex us, did not general hiſtory ſtep in to our aid; for the papal pretenſions to *Inveſtiture* ſufficiently ſhew the ſtate effects intended to be produced by that abſurd tenet. It was no preſumption in him, who was habitually employed in making a God, occaſionally to make a King or Emperor; and the erecting of the ceremony of marriage into a ſacrament, at the ſame time that the Prieſts were reſtrained from it, who, if it were really ſo, are at leaſt as much entitled to it as the Laity, can only be accounted for on ſimilar grounds, not only as it contributed to the Church a conſiderable quantity of gifts and oblations, but alſo greatly tended to increaſe its power and influence: the ceremony might be permitted or prohibited, as beſt ſuited its intereſt, or the wiſhes of the wealthy, the powerful, and the luxurious. The degrees of conſanguinity are often difficult either to be eſtabliſhed or even to be diſproved. Here then was a conſtant field for appeals, always attended with expence in proportion to the wealth and importance of

the parties; and here alſo a conduct was ſhewn, which might as fairly be taxed with worldly-mindedneſs as that of the Corinthians in the text; and, after having been fairly convicted of it, the Papiſts might with equal reaſon be aſked, *Are ye not carnal?*

To return to the main ſubject, the obſervation is juſt, *that in ſcience we are guided by reaſon, in hiſtory by facts*, which, if well aſcertained, cannot be invalidated by ſubſequent argument; ſince, if the facts are once eſtabliſhed, all reaſonings againſt them are nugatory and ſuperfluous. That a writer did not reprove a profeſſed Arian, is no argument that he approved of his opinion; nor even ſhould he occaſionally, on a particular ſubject, commend him, is it a proof that he coincided with him in *all* reſpects: and if it is clear that Theodotus[g] was the firſt Arian, and that he lived at the cloſe of the ſecond century, it is vain to attempt to prove that the Trinity is a doctrine that ſprung up ſubſequently to, and not at the origin of Chriſtianity. The truth is, that the writers mentioned as commending Arianiſm, will be found on examination ſtrongly to con-

[g] Biſhop Horſley's Tracts, p. 241.

demn

demn it. The ſilence of authors on ſubjects not immediately connected with the Trinity, is abundantly atoned for by the fulleſt atteſtation in its favour, whenever it enters into the queſtion. Beſides, corruptions from the nature of the things are poſterior to the inſtitutions of which they are corruptions. Arianiſm being a corruption of the doctrine of the Trinity, could not be prior to it. *That* hereſy then appeared two hundred years after the firſt preaching of the Goſpel, and it proceeded no further than to declare the Son, though inferior to the Father, yet a divine perſon ſtill, and a more important ſacrifice than any human being could have been. It repreſented him at the ſame time the deſerving object of praiſe and adoration. It was not till many centuries after that Socinianiſm carried this wickedneſs to the greateſt length, debaſed, as far as it could, the moſt holy Meſſiah, deprived him of his divine nature, and infinitely diminiſhed his power either to ſuffer for, or to ſave us.

It may be aſked, whether moral duties are not preferably enjoined to ſpeculative doctrines? Now, without admitting that of the Trinity to be merely theoretical, there may be a general or particular neceſſity for more than ordinarily dwelling upon it. When ob-

jections againſt it are diſſeminated throughout the whole nation, it ſhould operate as a call upon the Clergy, in a body, to be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon in inculcating the belief of it; and a ſimilar neceſſity attaches upon the paſtors of particular diſtricts, in which the ſame negligence or contempt ſhould unfortunately appear, otherwiſe our Saviour's injunctions, with reſpect to ſatisfying ſome duties, and omitting others, hold as to the inſiſting upon doctrinal, to the neglect of practical points: *this ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

The doctrine of the Trinity renders the holy Scriptures conſiſtent, and removes the neceſſity of amendment or interpolation. Reference to the literal ſenſe is alone requiſite to reconcile all the parts of the Chriſtian ſcheme. Grace, contrition, atonement, acceptance, are all well ſupported under the idea of a divine Mediator, and of a ſacrifice more than human. But how is thinking matter conſiſtent with an immortal ſoul? or how is a future judgment admiſſible on the ſuppoſition that the matter which, excluſively of the particle of the divine breath, forms one man, continually and ſucceſſively compoſes others? In ſuch a caſe, he has as little to do with the matter

matter that formed himſelf, as with that which formed others; for deny the ſeparate exiſtence of the ſoul, and every principle of individuation is loſt; and you might as well judge a multitude for the faults of one, as an individual for his own. Beſides, what mere man can perform an unſinning obedience? can juſtify himſelf, much leſs others? Under ſuch an incomplete idea, we ſhould be at a loſs for that perfection that ſupplies our deficiencies, and for that unſinning obedience which ſtamps a value on our otherwiſe imperfect ſervices.

If then the doctrine of the Trinity has its difficulties, the Arian or Socinian ſcheme has more; as is manifeſt from the pains taken to ſupport and give it currency, and from the aſtoniſhing perſeverance of its advocates, who engage with wonderful audacity in the cauſe, and who, when according to every impartial judgment they ſhould be perfectly convinced, then appear to be leaſt ſo.

[h] "If the obnoxious doctrine of the Tri-
"nity," ſays its inveterate opponent, "were
"removed from the Goſpel, it would more
"eaſily recommend itſelf to Infidels and Ma-

[h] Biſhop Horſley's Tracts, p. 264.

"hometans." What then would he, who charges us with art and prevarication in the defence of it, adviſe us for any ſecondary purpoſe whatever to abandon it? We ſhould then indeed be the proper objects of his ſcorn and reproach, and, which is more, incur the anger of our divine Maſter; beſides, the commands of God are expreſs againſt *handling the Scripture deceitfully*. If we muſt omit *this* doctrine to ingratiate ourſelves with one ſet of men, and *that* to accommodate another, we might at length be brought by piece-meal to give up the whole Goſpel. The reſurrection from the dead, and an heaven affording ſuch pure and refined joys as Chriſtianity promiſes, would probably be as repugnant to the inclinations of a Mahometan, as the doctrine of the Trinity is to his preconceived notions of the divine Unity.

As to infidels, indeed, the preaching of Chriſt to them under the deſcription of a mere man, and inculcating upon them the doctrine of the Unity, would be only teaching them what they knew, or might have known before; ſince Theiſm was the firſt and traditional religion of all mankind, ere idolatry and the Jewiſh revelation commenced; yet it anſwered no purpoſes of virtue or reformation.

When

When therefore the world, by retaining this apparent wiſdom, knew not God, it pleaſed him to ſave it by the *fooliſhneſs of preaching*. True he might, as poſſeſſing infinite power and knowledge, have ſaved us in any other way; but it is right to ſuppoſe, that, as he is all perfect, the actual is the beſt poſſible way; at leaſt he has not made us judges of his councils. In this, as in many other reſpects, all we have to do is to accept the gracious favour, without objecting to the terms, or canvaſſing the grounds of it: and as to infidels, it appears that if the knowledge of one God, while they retained it, could not preſerve them true to their duty, the deſertion of the doctrine of the Trinity, to introduce that of the Unity, is a meaſure that is neither expedient, nor likely to be ſucceſsful.

And indeed great is this myſtery of our religion, which human intellect is not able entirely to comprehend, nor accurately to explain; and if the three Perſons in the Godhead are actually one, it muſt be in a manner of which we can form no idea; neither is it liable to the objection ſo frequently urged againſt it, "that *production* is neceſſarily prior "to the thing produced, and that cauſe and "effect can never be cotemporary;" ſince we know

know that mind and thought exiſt together and at the ſame time, fire and light, and the object of ſight and the perception of it [i]. But hold, leſt, in our endeavours to explain this almoſt inexplicable myſtery, we ſhould be found preſumptuous in the ſight of the divine Majeſty, by endeavouring to intrude into his more immediate preſence, nay, to pry into his moſt auguſt and inſcrutable nature; nor let us incur the condemnation of attempting to be *wiſe above what is written*. And as to the doctrine of the Trinity, as far as it is an object of reaſon, let us admire and revere it; and as far as it is affirmed to be contained in the Scripture, let us aſſent to it in proportion to the ſupport it derives from thence, which, though continually queſtioned and attacked, yet has never been effectually ſet aſide.

Indeed arguments, or ſeeming arguments for that purpoſe, muſt be brought from remote antiquity, from hiſtorians profane or eccleſiaſtical, who wrote in languages now become either dead or nearly obſolete. The adverſaries therefore of our faith have this advantage, that few will have the patience or diligence, and fewer ſtill the abilities, to aſ-

[i] Biſhop Horſley's Tracts.

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certain the juſtneſs of their remarks, and follow them through writings at beſt unintereſting, generally unprofitable, and often diſguſting. They are ſure therefore of a temporary triumph, and that their adherents will not fail to give them credit for uncommon literature and ſuperior erudition: yet, thanks be to God, our eſtabliſhment, in which all are not confined to the province of preaching, has always produced thoſe, who have moſt honourably to themſelves, and moſt uſefully to the cauſe of Chriſtianity, devoted their labours to the vindication of ſuch doctrines as might occaſionally be queſtioned by the wickedneſs and preſumption of the age; and *their debtors* the Chriſtian world is for many able defences of the ſeveral important tenets of the Goſpel. As to the Trinity, *that* in our days has been attempted to be ſuperſeded, by one whoſe perſeverance, abilities, nay, apparent virtues, might create apprehenſion to the moſt confident friends of religion: yet it has pleaſed God to raiſe him up an antagoniſt, in moral qualifications at leaſt his equal, and in literature infinitely his ſuperior, who has carried the advantages of victory even farther than could be expected, having refuted, detected, expoſed, ſilenced him; and convicted him of

ſuch

ſuch arts, management, evaſion, and ſubterfuges, as muſt diſgrace any cauſe, and effectually damp the ardour of all thoſe who ſhall in future preſume to attack this moſt ſacred doctrine. From this copious repoſitory ſome arguments have been ſelected, which ſeemed moſt ſatisfactory, that thoſe who have leiſure and inclination may peruſe the remainder, and that thoſe who have not, nay, that the whole Chriſtian world may concur in the general reſolution, that if Paul, or Apollos, or even an Angel from heaven ſhould teach any other doctrine than what has been preached, they will rather rely on the expreſs declarations of the Scripture than on theirs, and that they may reſt aſſured that their teachers have not taught them cunningly deviſed fables, but that the doctrine of the Trinity, in particular, is built upon grounds firm, ſolid, and hitherto unſhaken. They are therefore, by every tie, moral, rational, and religious, obliged to hold faſt the poſſeſſion of their faith without wavering, to which they were ſolemnly pledged when they were baptized *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.*

SERMON

SERMON IV.

PROVERBS xxi. 30.

There is no Wiſdom, nor Underſtanding, nor Council againſt the Lord.

THERE are many devices, ſaith another Scripture, *in a man's heart; nevertheleſs the council of the Lord, that ſhall ſtand.* One object of man's device, though not eaſily attained, is to reconcile to his conſcience the unreſtrained indulgence of paſſion: this he has conſtantly, but vainly attempted, almoſt from the birth of time. With this perverſe propenſity all writers, who prefer the gratification of their own vanity, or the acquiſition of filthy lucre, to promoting the cauſe of truth and virtue, have generally endeavoured to comply. Nevertheleſs the dictates of conſcience, and the according impreſſions of Revelation, have maintained their ground; and notwithſtanding the wiles of wickedneſs, the aſſeveration

tion of audacity, and the inſinuations of philoſophy, falſely ſo called, ſtill the credibility of miracles, the proofs of Chriſtianity for inſtance, remains unſhaken and unmoved. They are as well atteſted as any hiſtorical fact; and it is very remarkable, that, though at preſent objections againſt them are eaſily produced and countenanced, yet at the time neareſt to that in which they were performed, ſuſpicions as to their authenticity were never harboured or propagated. Shall we then prefer modern doubts to the conviction of the antients, who lived neareſt the time of thoſe extraordinary events, and who were conſequently beſt qualified to judge of them?

We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy, that is, which is attended with evidence more, if poſſible, to be relied on by poſterity; which conſtantly accompanies it, and acquires in every ſucceeding age greater and greater ſtrength. If theſe foundations, then, are firm and compact, they cannot yield to any other weaker and ſubſequent ſuggeſtions.

The author of the Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire has unhappily united a deſire of gratifying the too general inclination to throw off all moral reſtraint, to abilities in other reſpects uncommon, and

to

to induſtry perſevering and unconquerable. But in proportion as his aim ſeems to have been to depreciate our religion and its divine Author, ſo has it been to elevate, into unmerited conſequence, a character moſt oppoſite and inimical to both; namely, the Emperor Julian, whoſe diſpoſition he has ſo long ſtudied, that he ſeems at length in ſome degree to have reduced his own to a ſimilarity with it. For that apoſtate, when perſecuting the Chriſtians, was remarkable on ſuch occaſions for adding inſult to injury [a]: he deprived them of their property, withal ſaying, "Be quiet, for "your religion forbids your purſuing legal "modes of redreſs." "Why," added he in the ſame ſpirit, "do you repine at ſufferings? "Your God, has he not taught you to deſpiſe "the goods of this world, and to undergo with "patience afflictions and injuſtice?" And on another occaſion he thus joins the moſt terrible menaces to a cold and malignant pleaſantry. "What an admirable law is that of "the Galilean, which teaches his followers "to forego advantages on earth to arrive at "Heaven! We are determined, as much as is "in our power, to expedite their journey thi-

[a] Le Beau, Hiſtoire du bas Empire, v. iii. p. 180.

"ther."

" ther." In like manner this hiſtorian, avoiding the plain and direct road, endeavours to undermine all divine revelation, and is leſs eaſily to be guarded againſt, from his introducing ſuſpicious ſurmiſe and rude raillery, rather than a conſiſtent charge or open accuſation.

Language perhaps has hardly a word more equivocal, than the common expreſſion, *cauſe*; for it may either be partial, or total, material, formal, or final—either principal, co-ordinate, or ſubordinate; nor till the preciſe ſenſe of the word, among ſo many, is clearly aſcertained, can we at all depend on the accuracy of the author's reaſoning who uſes it. Cauſes too, and thoſe eminently effectual, are often too mean to correſpond with the dignity of hiſtory to mention them; others are ſo concealed, that, though it may flatter the vanity of the political hiſtorian to ſuppoſe that he has diſcovered them, yet, as they often elude the ſearch of contemporaries, we cannot repoſe great confidence in the pretended knowledge of thoſe, who, in after-ages, conceive that they have rendered themſelves acquainted with them. In a poſthumous publication, indeed, this confeſſedly agreeable writer has endeavoured to atone for the miſchief done by his grand work; and at laſt declares, that, in his

his aſſignment of the cauſes that produced the ſucceſs of Chriſtianity, he meant only ſuch as were merely human. Yet who ſees not that his introduction of human cauſes was intended to render leſs neceſſary the interference of the divine and ſupreme; without which no human or ſubordinate one could poſſibly operate. If the former were to combine with the latter for unworthy purpoſes, it would derogate from its honour; and if by inferior cauſes it ſhould promote effects to which they were of themſelves inadequate, they would then be accidentally and improperly ſtyled cauſes; but not ſo in the true and accurate ſenſe of the expreſſion.

The firſt cauſe alledged by this author for the extenſive propagation of the Chriſtian faith, which took place ſoon after its appearance[1], was a Jewiſh zeal againſt idolatry prevailing among the converts to the Goſpel. But the Apoſtles firſt introduced it among their countrymen the Jews: how then could their patience and perſeverance be excited by a zeal againſt idolatry, in converting a people among whom at the time it was not practiſed? In this caſe the cauſe is applied to an object

[1] Vide Biſhop Watſon's Apology for Chriſtianity, p. 236.

which did not exiſt; it could not then be truly aſſigned.

Indeed the non-compliance of the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity, with the cuſtoms and opinions of thoſe, as well Jews as others, whom they attempted to convert, ſeems a method rather of eſtranging men from, than of reconciling them to, a new doctrine. So thought the Jeſuits, and thoſe ſent out in modern time to propagate the Goſpel in countries yet unconverted, who are generally taxed with accommodating too much the precepts of the Goſpel to the cuſtoms of the people amongſt whom they travelled; not as not practiſing the beſt means for effecting their purpoſes, but as deviating from the rectitude, and polluting the purity of the Chriſtian faith. This they had not done, had they judged, with our author, that a fierce and intolerant zeal was the beſt method of propagating religious opinions, and of gaining converts to them.

[m] Under this head our hiſtorian infers, from the recorded diſobedience of the Jews, under the very impreſſion, as it is ſaid, of the divine miracles, that they diſbelieved both them and

[m] Ibidem, p. 248.

the

the revelation itſelf, in atteſtation of which they were performed. This obſervation, it is to be feared, is hazarded with the malicious intention of undermining the ſupports as well of the Jewiſh as of the Chriſtian diſpenſation, or rather of piercing the one through the ſides of the other. But the objection will loſe its force with thoſe who are ſufficiently acquainted with the deplorable depravity of human nature. Alas! it is no argument that a man diſbelieves a religion, becauſe he *acts* in contradiction to it. Among the Jews, as among the Chriſtians, there will always be found ſuch as believe, yet tremble; who are obedient only while judgment impends over them, but who are continually abuſing that Mercy, to which, at laſt, they muſt have recourſe for pardon, if they would encourage any hopes of ſalvation; conſiſtently with which expectation, though they may occaſionally provoke the patience and long-ſuffering of God, yet they can never entirely reject and abandon it.

The partial or imaginary cauſes aſſigned by this celebrated hiſtorian, ſeem intended to depreciate, or rather to render unneceſſary the real ones, recorded as the principal means of

the ſucceſs of the Goſpel; namely, the miracles of our Saviour, and thoſe of his Apoſtles.

[n] Now the ſecond cauſe, which, independently of them, he introduces, is the doctrine of a future ſtate, and the expectation which was then encouraged of the preſent world being ſoon to be conſumed. But though this apprehenſion was, in the ſubſequent ages of the Church, applied to the enriching of convents, and other religious communities, yet in that light, and to that purpoſe, it could not be uſed by the firſt teachers of Chriſtianity, ſince it made no part of their doctrine. Of this there can be no greater nor more convincing proof, than the paſſage of St. Paul in his Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians: "We beſeech you, brethren, by the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not ſhaken, nor troubled, neither by ſpirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of judgment is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means." How could that notion, then, namely, of the near approach of the day

[n] Ibid. p. 255.

of

of judgment, be a cauſe of the extenſive acceptance of Chriſtianity, which the Apoſtles themſelves diſowned and diſcountenanced?

° Nor could the doctrine of the Millennium, a ſimilar reaſon aſſigned by our author, contribute to the ſame purpoſe; ſince among the primitive Chriſtians it was only partially, and not univerſally entertained. It is a notion not leſs contrary to the opinion of many antient, than to that of the moſt reſpectable modern writers: it reſted therefore on too diſputable grounds, and was confined within too narrow a circle, to be ſo extenſively effectual as our author ſuppoſes it.

Neither was it the doctrine of a future ſtate, as it is at this day profeſſed among Chriſtians, that was ſufficient of itſelf to produce the wonderful effects that, at its firſt ſtages, attended the Goſpel; for it promiſed not a ſtate of bliſs hereafter, conſiſtent with the indulgence of impure and irregular paſſion here: it required the ſacrifice of the deareſt earthly intereſts, to qualify men for that perfect ſtate to which it was intended to introduce them. It was not a merely ſpiritual exiſtence which it announced to thoſe who were obedient to

° Ibidem, p. 271.

it, but one in which the ſoul was again to be reunited to the body. This was contradictory as well to the general opinion, as to the reſult of conſtant experience. It was likewiſe attended, and ſtrongly charged with circumſtances of uncommon terror; ſuch as the diſſolution and conflagration of all things; conſiderations adapted rather to appal, than to conciliate, particularly the wicked, and which ſurely nothing could have engaged them to believe, but a conviction of the authority of thoſe who taught ſuch a doctrine, as well as of the concluſiveneſs of the proofs by which they evinced it.

[p] Theſe proofs conſiſting of miraculous powers which, according to our author, were *aſcribed* to the Apoſtles, but not actually poſſeſſed by them, or by their more immediate ſucceſſors, are mentioned by him as another cauſe of its ſucceſs.

But they are mentioned only to be miſrepreſented; and ſuch falſe and pretended miracles, as *he* recounts, were never exhibited by the Apoſtles, but were introduced in after-ages by the ſubſequent corruptions of the Church. However be it obſerved, that thoſe attributed to

[p] Ibidem, p. 276.

our

our Saviour and his Apoſtles in the New Teſtament, are ſo connected with the hiſtory of the Old, that they both muſt ſtand or fall together. Not ſo the falſe miracles introduced into other hiſtories: they have no natural connection with each other, or with either of the Teſtaments; nor are *they* at all concerned in their truth. Yet the forgery of, or pretence to miracles, far from ſubverting the credit of the true, actually eſtabliſh it. Were there none genuine, it never had entered into the mind of man to counterfeit any. In the ſame manner we may infer the actual exiſtence of numerous virtues, from the many attempts of hypocrites to impoſe upon the world by the empty appearances of them.

[q] Indeed preſent experience cannot invalidate the teſtimony of tradition in favour of miracles: not a man's own, becauſe that is very limited; not that of his friend, becauſe that is equally ſo. But if recourſe is had to the tradition of hiſtory, thoſe of all nations unite in bearing teſtimony to them, which cannot be rejected without denying as well *their* authenticity as that of the ſacred book,

[q] Ibidem, p. 285.

which the beſt judges have always declared to be the moſt genuine of any in the world.

The power of attraction in the magnet, ere it was known, was contrary to experience; but was that a good reaſon for denying it? Later experience has proved it true. Particular experience, therefore, is no more an objection againſt the ſuſpenſions of nature, as is the caſe in miracles, than it would have been againſt the diſcovery of powers before unknown; as is the caſe in the attraction of the magnet.

[r] The next cauſe aſſigned by this popular hiſtorian, is the virtue of the firſt Chriſtians. But what he confers with one hand, he reſumes with the other; the conſtant artifice of this ſeemingly candid writer: for the Goſpel, according to him, was firſt addreſſed to women, to the ignorant, [s] to the polluted with atrocious guilt; and it was only from their deſire of ſeparating themſelves from the reſt of mankind, that the firſt Chriſtians, like other ſects, pretended to extraordinary purity. Now the majority of the converts were not ſuch as this author has repreſented them. The Apoſtles

[r] Ibidem, p. 290. [s] Ibidem, p. 291.

might

might have enumerated among them ſome of [t] the principal men of the then principal cities: they had no fellowſhip with the works of darkneſs, but rather reproved them; yet wherever a ſincere deſire of reformation appeared, to that they adviſed, invited, encouraged men; and if their religion afforded comfort and medicine to a few wounded conſciences, it was rather a recommendation than a diſparagement of it. True, many ſects, but not all, have pretended to extraordinary piety; yet the purpoſe of the Apoſtles was not ſeparation, but to form the whole world into one ſociety, or rather to ſelect out of it a *peculiar people zealous of good works*. They withdrew from the Jews only as far as they were wicked; and throughout all ages ſeparation from the profane has never been reckoned a diſpoſition to ſchiſm or ſectariſm. As to the Gentiles, it is manifeſt that the Apoſtolical invitation to union was particularly addreſſed to them; and how the Apoſtles could be ſaid to be deſirous of ſeparating from thoſe with whom they were never effectually united, is a queſtion which may be left with thoſe to determine

[t] Ibidem, p. 295.

who

who pin their faith upon the ſleeve of this author.

The laſt cauſe by our hiſtorian aſſigned for the ſucceſs of Chriſtianity, is the wonderful union which he ſays ſubſiſted among the firſt Chriſtians. But this indeed, though they aimed at it, they could never accompliſh: they were early and conſtantly ſubject to be broken into ſects, and to be divided by a variety of opinions; nay the very perſecutions which they endured tended to diſunite them from thoſe whoſe zeal was not the moſt warm, and who therefore, in time of afflictions, fell away.

"Not that the diverſity of opinions, which ſtill exiſt, can be fairly laid to the charge either of the primitive Church, or of the Reformation afterwards, as if they neceſſarily gave birth to it. Alas! it ſeems inherent in our nature. Truth certainly cannot be but one; yet wherever there are men, they will diſagree, particularly as to its more abſtruſe points: in this they are generally determined more by their intereſts than their intellect. All too are naturally ill-diſpoſed to whatever awes or reſtrains them; yet ſome follow more au-

[u] Ibidem, p. 300.

ſtere,

ſtere, others more relaxed modes of faith; and even the former act thus conſiſtently with the before-mentioned hatred of authority, ſince it is often found that the more openly rigid are covertly the more licentious. But God, and he alone has a right to do it, produces good and advantage to the cauſe of religion even from evil. The various ſects are certainly a check upon each other, and *falſe teachers* on the profeſſors of the original and true doctrine. Thus, perhaps, virtue and religion, on the whole, derive ſome benefit from the energy and emulation which, reſpectively to recommend themſelves, the different ſects exhibit. But no merit is due to the authors of theſe diviſions on that account; nor are the advantages equal to thoſe that would accrue from the whole Chriſtian Church's maintaining, as the Goſpel directs, an entire harmony, and a permanent and uninterrupted peace, among all its members.

It is true, that in every Chriſtian congregation a diſcipline prevailed, which it were well for the common religion, if it at preſent in a greater degree ſubſiſted. None but thoſe of good character it received, or who ſhewed ſigns of ſincere contrition and repentance; and the

the latter, after baptiſm, underwent a ſevere diſcipline of faſting, watching, prayer, and ſecluſion, ere they could be completely admitted into the boſom of the Church. But theſe ſeverities, by the way, ſeem, unleſs ſupported by the other divine aids which the Apoſtles poſſeſſed, to have been rather diſcouragements than allurements to freſh converts to enter into it.

"As to the various regulations of the infant Church for the government of its members, this power of enacting them it poſſeſſed in common with all other ſocieties; and with reſpect to them they were left by their divine Maſter to be guided by the dictates of their own prudence; the Goſpel, as it contains no directions as to them, ſo neither is it concerned in the uſe of them. We muſt confeſs that there have been vicious prieſts, and biaſſed eccleſiaſtical councils, that have enjoined impious and irrational decrees. The Church of Rome too is likewiſe guilty of abominable errors, as well in opinion as practice; but as religion approves of none of theſe things, but expreſsly forbids them, ſo neither is ſhe at all

[w] Ibid. p. 312.

chargeable

chargeable with them: let man bear the blame, but let divine Revelation remain ſpotleſs and unimpeached.

Yet it ſeems an unenviable ingenuity to take a miſchievous pleaſure in accumulating all that can be ſaid againſt the firſt Chriſtians, and at the ſame time to ſuppreſs all that might be urged in their favour; to blow into a flame each ſpark of calumny againſt them, and at the ſame time to extinguiſh the flagrant accuſations which then ſubſiſted againſt their adverſaries. [x] The hiſtorian dwells with apparent ſatisfaction on the diſcovery that a reputed Saint was publickly accuſed of ſo mean a crime as that of theft, but, for purpoſes beſt known to himſelf, he conceals the circumſtance that the charge was entirely falſe and ill-grounded; a conduct this, that by every impartial reader muſt be condemned, as a manifeſtly injurious ſuppreſſion of a material point in the caſe; and ſuch a charge rather confers reputation than ignominy on the accuſed, and on the cauſe in which he was engaged.

Not that his intention or ſincerity makes the martyr, as is pretended by [y] a writer of a

[x] Gibbon's Miſcellanies, Vol. II. p. 574.
[y] Voltaire.

ſome-

ſomewhat ſimilar ſtamp, but the abſolute truth of the cauſe can alone entitle the ſufferer to that ſacred appellation. Our hiſtorian too, with an equally favourable diſpoſition towards Chriſtianity as uſual, declares, that it firſt recommended itſelf to Conſtantine by the doctrines of paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance, which it inculcates; yet theſe were not known till many centuries after, when the Scripture precepts of loyalty to legal ſovereigns were ſtrained, as they always are by the ſpirit of party, to an unnatural extreme; but as to Conſtantine, he had none to contend with, who oppoſed him under the pretence of ſupporting the cauſe of liberty, except only rival candidates for the empire. No, that ſacred flame was extinguiſhed with the laſt heroes of the republic; nor has it ever ſince, to any purpoſe, revived in Rome pagan or papiſtical; nor has the latter ever pretended to it, till recently ſome modern writers of that perſuaſion have indeed ſurpriſed us [z], by attempting to reconcile civil liberty with political ſlavery, freedom of diſquiſition with papal infallibility, and the rights of man with the ſummary proceedings of the inquiſition. But of this

[z] Vide Hiſtory of Henry II. and Church and State.

more

more hereafter. In the mean time, how could the charge againſt Chriſtianity, exhibited by the hiſtorian of the Decline and Fall, that it made citizens diſobedient to the government, and ſoldiers mutinous, be conſiſtent with what he ſays in the accuſation juſt now mentioned, that its doctrines of paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance recommended it to the rulers of the preſent world? Surely theſe two accuſations cannot ſubſiſt together. As to martyrs, there were certainly enough of them, who ſuffered ſufficiently to eſtabliſh the truth of their religion; [a] but the needleſs pains taken in endeavouring, by a very precarious [b] calculation, to reduce their number, to palliate, if poſſible, the cruelty of thoſe who conſigned them, though innocent, to ſuch ſevere torments, betray a mind very manifeſtly biaſſed againſt our moſt holy faith, and muſt take very much from all that a writer under ſuch influence might aſſert in diſparagement of it.

What a parade is there made of the virtues, the erudition, the heroiſm of Julian, though one abominable method of divination, as practiſed by him, is entirely omitted, which yet

[a] Vide Gibbon.
[b] Vide Abridgement of Gibbon, Vol. II. p. 231.

is

is recorded by an [c] author, of whom the hiſtorian of the Decline and Fall has made frequent and liberal uſe; and with reſpect to ſuperſtition, though the firſt Chriſtians are occaſionally by this writer abundantly loaded with this accuſation alſo, yet how is this reconcileable with the charge made againſt them by the ſame author, even of atheiſm itſelf? *That* at leaſt, and ſuperſtition, are totally incompatible.

[d] They are accuſed likewiſe of conſpiracies againſt the ſtate; yet the very ſame author taxes them with meanneſs of ſpirit, with an idle and philoſophical abſtraction from worldly affairs, with an Epicurean purſuit of merely ſelfiſh gratification. Men thus diſpoſed quit not uſually their retirement, to encounter cares of any ſort, much leſs to mingle in conſpiracies.

[c] Muratori Annali d'Italia, Vol. II. p. 427. Così nel celebre Tempio di Carres dedicato alla Luna, per quanto narra Teodoreto*, chiuſoſi Giuliano un giorno durante la ſuddetta ſpedizione, non ſi ſeppe coſa ivi faceſſe, ſe non che uſcito, miſe le guardie a quel Luogo, con ordine di non laſciarvi entrar perſona, ſino al ſuo ritorno. Venuta poi la nuova di ſua morte, fu aperto il Tempio, e vi ſi trovò una donna impiccata col ventre aperto, per qualche incanteſimo fatto da Giuliano, o pure per cercar nelle di lei viſcere quel, che gli dovea ſuccedere nella guerra co' Perſiani.

[d] Biſhop Watſon's Apology, p. 343.

* Lib. 3. H. c. 21.

They

[e] They are likewiſe injuriouſly charged with the commiſſion of the moſt atrocious crimes. How then, according to our author, could they recommend their religion by their apparent virtues? But the falſehood of this accuſation is abundantly proved, by the yet extant Epiſtle of the younger Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, who, ſo far from confirming this calumny, declares concerning them, [f] "that "they were a deſcription of people who bound "themſelves by an oath not to commit any "wickedneſs, who met periodically, and ſang "hymns unto Chriſt as unto God, and after a "temperate repaſt retired." Here then is the ſo much required teſtimony of an Heathen to the character of the firſt Chriſtians, and, what is more, it atteſts their innocence.

So weak and inconcluſive are the reaſonings of otherwiſe learned men againſt the Lord, and againſt his anointed! The few ſelected may ſerve as ſpecimens of the reſt; and doubtleſs their other councils, were there time or inclination to examine them, would prove equally frivolous and unfounded. Councils did I ſay? It is an abuſe of the term: they

[e] Ibidem. [f] Ibidem, p. 247.

are but the deſpicable effuſions of depravity and its uſual attendants, artifice and miſrepreſentation. Nor does the whole diſcourſe afford a more important inference, than the different effects of learning purſued for the purpoſe of juſtifying ourſelves and others in the practice of wickedneſs, or for ever eſtabliſhing men in the paths of virtue and righteouſneſs. In the one caſe, the more we improve in ſolely human accompliſhments, the vainer, and conſequently the blinder we are rendered as to all the moſt uſeful and moſt important purpoſes of our being: in the latter, the more we know, the more virtuous we are; and the more virtuous, the more complete we become in all enviable and really profitable ſcience, till at length upon the minds of ſuch truth beams in meridian ſplendour, and the clouds of error and ſophiſtry no ſooner collect than they are diſperſed: they are reproved of all, they are convinced of all, and falling down and worſhipping, they are enabled to declare of the univerſe, as the devout Chriſtian concerning the congregation of the faithful, *Surely God is in this place*; neither is their heart troubled, but believing in the ſupreme Being, they are conſequently juſtified in believing

lieving alſo in him, whom he has by ſo many irrefragable proofs declared that he has ſent. Now upon all that hear me, and particularly upon thoſe who regulate their literary purſuits according to this plan, *peace be upon them, and upon the Iſrael of God.*

SERMON V.

MATT. vii. 16.

Ye ſhall know them by their Fruits.

THIS criterion, laid down by our Saviour, of the characters of men individually, holds equally of them when united in ſociety. The proof then of the truth of any religion, Chriſtianity, for inſtance, is beſt eſtabliſhed by its utility; and how a writer, engaged in ſuch a ſubject as the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, could be blind to ſuch a repreſentation of it, which naturally reſulted from his ſubject, is indeed aſtoniſhing, could it not be accounted for from the uncommon vanity which ſeems to have accompanied him throughout, and from a deſire of rendering his work agreeable to the depraved taſte of the generality, rather than to that of the good and judicious. In the body of his work we are preſented with a conciſe, yet laborious

ſummary of the Roman law, from which we neceſſarily infer the prodigious erudition of the writer; but it had certainly tended more to the enlightening of the reader, had each particular law, under the ſeveral general heads, been accompanied with the date when it was enacted, at leaſt during the period that coincided with his work. In that caſe the laws had atteſted the hiſtory, and the hiſtory the laws, by ſhewing the reaſon and occaſion of their promulgation. And then it may be conjectured, that, inſtead of ſeeming objections againſt Chriſtianity, many conſiderations had been ſuggeſted in its favour, all tending to advance virtue, to improve manners, and conſequently to increaſe the general ſtock of happineſs among mankind.

Together with other advantages, it would have appeared that Chriſtianity had introduced a more liberal law of nations. The Roman policy of conſtantly ſupporting the weaker againſt the ſtronger, the more effectually in the end to ſubdue both, was directly contrary to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, which has been known to interfere between the victor and the vanquiſhed, moderating the extravagance of the one, and availing itſelf of every poſſible plea in favour of the other: nay, the

Roman

Roman Prelates themſelves, even in the worſt times of the hierarchy, it muſt be owned, have often, where their peculiar intereſts were not concerned, ſhewn themſelves the patrons of juſtice, the defenders of the diſtreſſed, and the gracious miniſters of mercy. They have been known to protect, by threatening the aggreſſors with the terrible thunders of excommunication, the weaker and oppreſſed, againſt the ſtronger and encroaching nation, to ſummon to the tribunal of reaſon the claims of contending monarchs, and to determine, by their authority, in favour of the more equitable cauſe. The propagation of Chriſtianity among the northern nations of Europe, through the aid derived to it from the newly-created emperors of the Weſt, was indeed marked with violence. Thoſe champions of the faith, marched as it were with the ſword in one hand and the Scriptures in the other, the conſequence was, that the vanquiſhed were obliged to ſubmit as well to the ſovereignty, as to embrace the religion of their conquerors: perhaps theſe rude nations could not otherwiſe be brought under its light and eaſy yoke. Of this, ſince the increaſing rays of ſcience have illumined them, they are at laſt con-

vinced. Inclination has reconciled them to what neceſſity introduced; and they cannot be inſenſible of advantages which, however communicated, it is infinitely better to poſſeſs, than to be entirely deſtitute of them.

Chriſtianity has been by its divine Author compared to leaven: as that pervades the whole lump, ſo is the former in a way to accompliſh its intended effect, the moral improvement and reformation of the world; but though, in conformity to the deſigns of Providence, obſtacles ſlowly recede, and more extenſive acceptance is as ſlowly obtained, yet evils which have been long in removing are leſs likely to return, and advantages not ſuddenly attained are on that account the more prized, and conſequently are of longer continuance. When Emperors ſat on the throne to decide upon metaphyſical queſtions, and oppoſite parties in the ſtate took different ſides, the queſtions at leaſt were thoroughly agitated, and the learning of the age was rather increaſed than otherwiſe: but if, under the immediate view of ſuch authority, the abſolute determination of them was in vain attempted, the reſult muſt be to call our attention to more uſeful ſpeculations, and to revive the

the genuine ſpirit of our religion, which conſiſts leſs *in the knowledge that puffeth up, than in the charity that edifieth.*

A candid and legitimate hiſtorian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, had found a ſignal opportunity for diſplaying the merits of Chriſtianity, as well in the duties of mercy and compaſſion that it generally recommends, as in its particularly diſcouraging thoſe ſanguinary ſports, to which the antient Romans were ſo long habituated, and ſo fondly attached. If the then moſt poliſhed nations were thus brutal in their pleaſures, thoſe deſtitute of their advantages muſt have been even more ſo. The ſuppreſſion therefore of ſo popular and favourite an entertainment, could be attributed to nothing but to the effect of that mild and humane religion which had taken root, and ſpread wide its branches amongſt them, at the time theſe amuſements were entirely diſcontinued. That men ſhould be trained to reciprocal ferocity, ſhould for hire either receive or inflict wounds, and gain applauſe in proportion to their encountering danger with leſs fear, and as they endured the fatal ſtroke with greater reſolution, to thoſe educated in Chriſtian ſentiments ſeems aſtoniſhing: indeed nothing can be more ſo, except

cept that there ſhould have exiſted human beings, and thoſe pretending to high degrees of refinement, who were capable of deriving pleaſure from ſo diſguſting a ſpectacle. The contentions of the *blue and green* factions were frivolous indeed, often ſeditious; yet, when conſidered as ſuperſeding the ſhews of gladiators, their being afterwards excluſively encouraged may be regarded as an improvement introduced by Chriſtianity, thus weaning men from ſanguinary ſports, and engaging them in thoſe of mere amuſement; not ſo uſeful as the ſcenes of the ſerious drama, which it encouraged, or indeed did not diſapprove, as they tended to the purifying of the paſſions by holding up a faithful mirror to life, and by enriching with moral ſentiments the human mind.

The mitigation of the penal laws might alſo have been, by an unprejudiced hiſtorian, numbered among the many advantages which the Empire received from the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity. The mutilated ſtatues, dug from the remains of ruined cities, were ſuppoſed to be rendered thus by the hand of time; but further experience has clearly aſcertained that they but too faithfully repreſent the horrid puniſhment uſually inflicted on ſlaves or captives.

tives. Surely even the ſale of them was preferable to ſuch a cruel treatment. Impaling, crucifixion, and other dreadful modes of execution, are now grown obſolete: while atrocious crimes are committed, capital puniſhments will be neceſſary; yet even where life is juſtly forfeited, the laws ſhould be content with depriving the guilty of it in a manner as little as poſſible offenſive to the feelings of the ſpectators, and not unneceſſarily excruciating to thoſe who ſuffer. The cuſtom of cauſing criminals to look ſtedfaſtly on burning braſs till their ſight was extinguiſhed by it; a puniſhment undoubtedly cruel, yet not equal to the abſolute deſtruction of them; the conſigning to a monaſtery, or to the office of the prieſthood, which could not afterwards be reſigned, thoſe whoſe crimes rendered them dangerous, or abilities ſuſpicious to the ſtate; nay, the aſylums afforded by religious inſtitutions for offenders of all kinds, till the paſſions of the injured ſhould have time to cool; all ſeem to ſpeak the efforts of Chriſtianity to reconcile neceſſity with indulgence, puniſhment with mercy, and even the ſtroke of death with an eaſy infliction of it.

Our own age may be congratulated for being

ing infinitely leſs culpable in this reſpect than thoſe that have preceded it. The enormous cruelties that have accompanied the revolution in a neighbouring nation, have met in ours with almoſt univerſal abhorrence: only a few excuſed them as neceſſary, to counteract their opponents, and therefore actually aſcribable to *them*. But thoſe who have been taught as the truth is in Jeſus, never think themſelves juſtified in returning evil for evil, but endeavour to overcome it with good; performing the latter at all events, and at the hazard of all conſequences. Lately, too, when a Roman mode of puniſhment was revived in a part of our iſland, ſtill ſubject to their laws, the aſſembled multitude turned away in diſguſt and deteſtation of the horrid ſight. Here then the manners as it were corrected the laws: and this conduct augured well, proving them in no ſmall degree tinctured with the benevolent principles of our religion; and whatever legiſlator ſhall ſo far comply with her ſpirit as to expunge the too ſanguinary pages that ſtill diſgrace our ſtatute book, will deſerve well of his country, of humanity; and at the ſame time that he ſhews by ſuch an inſtance how much he is concerned

for

for the dignity of human nature in general, he will afford an indiſputable proof of the excellency of his own.

The author of the Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall has occaſion to remark the groſſneſs of manners exhibited in common life by the antient Romans. Though repreſented to us, in their national character, as conquerors of the world, yet is there nothing amiable or engaging in their intercourſe with each other as individuals: the inſolence of the rich, the meanneſs of the poor, living upon offal regularly diſpenſed to them at the gates of the higher citizens; the haughtineſs of the patron towards his client, even when he condeſcended to admit him to the ſame table; are quite foreign to modern opinions and practice. And to what is this owing but to Chriſtianity, which ſummons to a tribunal before which the higheſt muſt bend, and which neglects not the claims of the very loweſt? The doctrine, peculiarly its own, of charity, introduces the true and only practicable idea of equality, by which the wants of the many are relieved by the ſuperfluities of the few; and its injunction, that the diſciples *ſhould waſh one another's feet*, affords a queſtion, whether it improve

prove moſt thoſe who perform the duty, or thoſe to whom it is performed?

Hence condeſcenſion in ſuperiors, and ſubmiſſion from inferiors; hence the endearing offices of civility, courteſy, humanity; hence a participation in the pleaſures, as well as a ſenſe of the ſorrows of others; hence too we increaſe our own joys by communicating them, and derive comfort under our ſufferings from the pity and compaſſion which they excite. Hence our cities become ſocial and agreeable habitations, and our ſtreets are free from offence or violence; our couches too are ſecure from ſuſpicion or injury, and, inſtead of the ſolitude and drearineſs that reigns in the dens of ſavages, our tables afford occaſion for amuſement and inſtruction, for the effuſions of the underſtanding, or for the infinitely more valuable expanſions of the heart. Theſe advantages were ſeldom to any extent experienced before the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity; and that they are now ſo generally felt, muſt be reckoned among its moſt obvious and pleaſing effects.

The hiſtorian of the Decline and Fall is not to be blamed for not mentioning the influence of Chriſtianity on the laws which he has occaſion

caſion to introduce. No; but the fault lies here, that he allows it not in this particular its full force. The ſevere edicts publiſhed by the Chriſtian Emperors againſt adultery, ſpeak them ſuggeſted by a ſyſtem that requires the moſt exact and ſcrupulous purity of manners. The extremes to which this doctrine was carried were natural to a new tenet; and had our author been as deſirous of ſelecting good, as he is of expoſing depraved female characters, he might have found, even amongſt the Empreſſes, ſuch as were not leſs exemplary than they were elevated, who were ſhining inſtances of virtue and piety, and for the forming of whom the world was indebted to Chriſtian principles.

The Roman law originally inveſted the huſband with the ſame power over the wife that a father had over his ſon; namely, that of life and death. Divorces were likewiſe eaſily permitted, notwithſtanding the frequent exertions of Chriſtianity to regulate the inſtitution according to our Saviour's plan, and to confine the cauſes of ſeparation to thoſe laid down in the Goſpel: but Juſtinian, according to our author, conſulted in his famous code the unbelieving Civilians, and his matrimonial laws, all owing in this reſpect greater indulgence,

gence, are influenced by the earthly motives of juſtice, policy, and the natural freedom of both ſexes. Happy times! in which, for the improvement of their morals, the works of ſuch writers are entruſted to the hands of youth. Surely that ſex will no longer be partial to an author, whoſe licentiouſneſs, in the pure times of the republic had been offenſive even to the dignity of a Roman matron, and who would deprive Chriſtianity of its boaſted pre-eminence, that of advancing, on the ſureſt grounds, the female character to its higheſt perfection.

It will be needleſs to mention, among other effects which the Romans, and ourſelves after them, have obtained by embracing Chriſtianity, the total abolition of the horrid cuſtom of human ſacrifices. Oroſius taxes them with it even in the glorious æra of their republic; and moreover tells them, in commendation of the Goſpel, that though it could not avert misfortunes, it furniſhed, however, the moſt effectual motives for enduring them. Yet there is a point, which, on the preſent ſubject, cannot but be mentioned, and which, by preventing human miſery in the extreme, has proportionally contributed to our happineſs; namely, the entire diſcouragement it ſhows to the

the before too prevalent cuſtom of ſuicide. It was that in which Stoiciſm principally prided itſelf; its lawfulneſs or unlawfulneſs was left undetermined by moſt of the other ſects; it was the fancied refuge too often ſought by weak, unenlightened, deſpairing nature; yet how little beneficial was it to the ſufferer, how fraught with terror to the ſurvivor?

But the doctrines of Chriſtianity naturally tend to reſtrain and compoſe the paſſions; and the conſiderations it ſuggeſts, of themſelves reſiſt and prevent this horrid practice. They teach, that, if we ſuffer for our ſins, it is but juſt that we ſhould abide by ſuch conſequences as we have brought upon ourſelves; that if we are oppreſſed by the divine vengeance, the ſatisfying of his juſtice here, is preferable to enduring the eternal effects of it hereafter: all impatience, diſtruſt, deſpair vaniſh before the idea of an omnipotent, yet all-gracious Being, who *can ſuccour us in all ſorrows*, and *deliver us from all dangers*, and *who in the midſt of wrath thinketh upon mercy*.

Another advantage, unqueſtionably to be attributed to Chriſtianity, and which this declamatory writer had ſuch an obvious opportunity of remarking, was the ſilence of the

Oracles, which took place almoſt immediately on its eſtabliſhment. When the real truth appeared, the fabrications of falſehood in courſe were mute; for that they were fallacious engines of deception, we at this time cannot doubt. Yet how long did they terrify and enthrall antient Greece, the nurſe of ſcience and of the arts; and, as if the impoſition had not profited enough from human ignorance and credulity, the Romans adopted and continued it; whilſt none of the boaſted ſages and philoſophers of either nation was ſo kind as to open their eyes upon this ſubject. Socrates dared not do it, and Cicero, all-accompliſhed as he was, rather ſtraitened than looſened the bands of this inveterate ſuperſtition.

Another, and ſtill more glorious effect of Chriſtianity, paſſed over with equal inattention by our author, is the total and complete overthrow of idolatry, atchieved in the period of which he treats, and which happened ſeemingly to his infinite regret. Yet what tongue can tell the immoralities of that mode of religion, what fancy but muſt be vitiated by its licentiouſneſs, what conſcience but muſt be harrowed up by the atrocities that accompanied it? The mere worſhippers of the idol had

had been rightly enough left to the conſequences of their weakneſs and folly; but it was to reſcue thoſe who were diſguſted with the wickedneſs that was aſſociated with ſuch rites, that a revelation was, in the early ages of the world, vouchſafed from heaven: at firſt ſevere indeed in proportion to the obſtinacy of the diſorder intended to be remedied by it, but which in time was to yield to a milder diſpenſation, as more congenial to the infinite mercy of God. How miſapplied then the talents, that could counteract ſo gracious a deſign! Our author therefore may be commended for brilliancy of ſtyle, may be propoſed as a pattern of indefatigable induſtry, and of the moſt profound erudition, but none that is duly zealous of the dignity of human nature, but muſt abhor the deſign of apologiſing for a religion of ſuch indelible infamy and debaſement, as is idolatry; and he muſt equally reprobate the attempt (when the ſubject naturally led to the direct contrary) of calumniating the Chriſtian inſtitution, which, after the former had been rivetted for many ages among the cuſtoms of mankind, was, under God, the happy means of reſcuing them from it.

[g] What a triumph did Chriſtianity at laſt exhibit in the temple of Jupiter Ammon, in the city of the African Alexandria! The ſuperb idol was erected in a temple, for grandeur and ſublimity worthy of a metropolis, only next to the two capitols of the eaſtern and weſtern world; in wealth, perhaps their ſuperior. A pedeſtal ſupported it, in heighth above the ordinary human ſtature; but neither the pomp of the place, nor the enraged countenances of its numerous votaries, could abaſh the enterpriſing zeal of a band of determined Chriſtians, collected for the purpoſe, who concluded an harangue againſt the folly and impiety of ſuch a religion, by aiming, at the hazard of their lives, with ſuch weapons as the preſent moment ſupplied, at the interior limbs of the ſtupendous ſtatue a deciſive blow. It came down with a tremendous thundering craſh: the aſtoniſhed multitude ſuppoſed the univerſe itſelf would have fallen with it; they pauſed awhile in ſilent and alarmed expectation, but as neither ſun nor ſtar, nor even the

[g] Le Beau Hiſt. du bas Empire, V. v. p. p. 342. He inſerts a remarkable circumſtance. On abbattit la tête, dont il ſortoit une multitude de rats, auxquels ce Dieu ſervoit de retraite.

moſt

moſt inſignificant object in the inanimate creation ſeemed affected by the event, the light of ſenſe, of reaſon, of reflection, in an inſtant pierced the accumulated gloom, with which they had been from their infancy enveloped; and they treated their once adored divinity with indignity as extravagant as had been their former adoration. Thus, in about the two thouſand five hundredth year of the world, was it at laſt, with ſome difficulty indeed, reſtored to the uſe of its ſenſes. Go now, and boaſt of the omnipotence of human reaſon, doubt, if you can, of the neceſſity of a diſpenſation of grace, or queſtion the power of revelation to guide, control, enlighten the human mind, and ſtill admire ſuch writers, who, though promiſing you liberty, yet are themſelves the ſervants of corruption, which, ſhould they communicate, the conſequence muſt be, that you will be plunged into errors and enormities perhaps as debaſing as idolatry itſelf.

The papiſtical modern writers, hiſtorians they would be thought, ſuppoſe, that, at the firſt ſeparation of theſe kingdoms from the Church of Rome, the ſacrifice of a few obnoxious tenets, on the part of the latter, had ſtill retained the former in their accuſtomed obedience to the Holy See; but light once

let in upon a few of their diſtinguiſhing doctrines, muſt have evinced the abſurdity of all the reſt. So it has happened; and though one of their [h] writers, when treating on a ſubject that naturally leads to it, omits the circumſtance, yet it is manifeſt, that the tenaciouſneſs of the Latins in favour of image-worſhip, was the principal obſtacle to their union with the Greek Church. Indeed the ſpiritual ſlavery of theſe kingdoms had been but half removed, if, when the ſupremacy of the Biſhop of Rome had been denied, the ſervice in an unknown tongue, auricular confeſſion, and image-worſhip, with all its train of follies, had been retained; and in the preſent enlightened ſtate of the human mind, that ſuch a corrupt mode of worſhip ſtill continues, can only be attributed to the prevailing opinion, that Chriſtianity, even under ſuch a deformed appearance, is ſtill infinitely preferable to the entire expulſion of it.

And we have an opportunity of obſerving the truth of theſe remarks, and the effects of Chriſtianity being extirpated, in the melancholy events lately ſo frequent in the world around us; where the miſery ariſing from its

[h] Church and State.

abſence

abſence is more than can be expreſſed, and the diſtreſs nearly without remedy. But theſe dangerous innovations are particularly deprived of the advantages pointed out in this diſcourſe, as immediately reſulting from religion. Perhaps divine Providence intended that the moral effects produced by revelation, ſhould in its later progreſs be as unequivocal arguments of its truth, as the ſuſpenſion of nature's laws were at its commencement: if ſo, then the different effect of Chriſtianity on human conduct, and that of the novel ſchemes, ſhould as naturally determine your judgment, as the fire that deſcended from heaven at the command of Elijah, which the Prieſts of Baal, though challenged to it, could not perform, unalterably convinced the underſtandings of the Iſraelites. It is a continued ſeries of ſuch proofs that reſults from the facts recorded in general hiſtory, for the neglect or miſrepreſentation of which we have ventured to blame the writer of the Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and it is the criterion to which, in concluſion, it is intended to refer you. If you think the atrocities occaſioned by the authors of the late revolution ſufficiently engaging to induce you to imitation, bid adieu to Chriſtianity, and follow them; but

if the mild virtues, and extenſive bleſſings of ſociety, produced by the doctrines of Chriſt, as imperfectly ſketched out in this diſcourſe, evidently declare him a teacher ſent from God, then immediately, and at all events ſtill continue *to follow him.*

SERMON

SERMON VI.

JOHN xix. 11.

Jeſus anſwered, Thou couldeſt have no power at all againſt me, unleſs it were given thee from above.

SO ſpoke the meek Jeſus to the inſolent Roman governor; the former, certainly in his perſon concentrating as it were all ſpiritual, the latter, repreſenting in his the moſt extenſive temporal power. The event which the text records, ſeems to deſcribe the nature of both: in Chriſt the power was indiſputably divine, to Pilate, according to our Saviour's own aſſertion, it was given from above. Whether temporal, then, or ſpiritual, they are alike derived from the ſame ſource: though the latter bears more uniform marks of its origin than the former, they are conſequently compatible, and not, as is now the faſhion to repreſent

preſent them, entirely inconſiſtent with each other. That they ſhould always coincide, is no more than could be wiſhed; but that the temporal ſhould purſue its preſcribed ends, the praiſe of the good, and the puniſhment of the wicked, is never ſo likely as when it aſſociates with the ſpiritual. Even ſtates unenlightened by revelation have ſeen the neceſſity of ſome kind of religion or other, and therefore have coaleſced with falſe, rather than none; otherwiſe their ſtay and ſpring, as it were, had been languid and loſt. For it is tyranny only that extorts obedience by ſeveverity, but judicious legiſlatures diſtinguiſh themſelves as ſuch by abrogating gradually, and as they can, ſanguinary ſtatutes; and by introducing ſuch diſpoſitions, as would in time, were they to become general, render all laws unneceſſary. Intended to reſtrain the bad, they are by no means made for the good; and men are naturally rendered ſuch by practiſing the precepts of that religion which moſt refines and purifies the mind, and places their affections on *things above, and not on things on the earth.* Wiſe ſtates therefore naturally avail themſelves of ſuch principles; without which all abſolute duties would want a neceſſary ſupport, and all relative would become a

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rope of ſand. It is true, laws cannot arraign the thoughts, as the words and actions, but this is becauſe they cannot know them, otherwiſe *they* are as proper objects for their animadverſion as the overt act; nay, wherever the intention is diſcerned, it either aggravates or mitigates the malignity of the offence. We are told, that with the ſalvation of the ſoul human governments have no concern: with the mind they certainly have; elſe why did ſo many ſage nations of antiquity preſcribe an education of their youth, correſpondent to their ſeveral polities? It is certain, that if the virtues which all good laws enjoin do not actually *ſave* the ſoul, ſtill they, in an eminent degree, contribute to it. The powers then that be, are ordained of God, as all truly ſpiritual are, and all falſely ſo, pretend to be; it follows that there is no abſurdity in their coaleſcing, but that there thus exiſts a natural ground for their union, alliance, and harmony.

Our Saviour, the Lord of all things, yet acknowledges in the text the heaven-deſcended power of Pilate, and accordingly ſubmits to it; pleads to the accuſation, nor pretends to appeal from the deciſion of the tribunal. Indeed, whatever is received, muſt be ſo according

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ing to the circumſtances of the receiver. Chriſt, as a man, was ſubject to an human judicature: the ſpiritual powers, as they are called, though primarily derived from him, yet, as exerciſed by men, muſt be ſubject to it likewiſe—the Prieſt, the Prelate, the Apoſtle muſt yield to the preſſure of human power. Even at preſent their extraordinary commiſſion cannot exempt them from obeying the calls of ordinary prudence; being, as mortals, incompetent to ſecure every deſirable end, they muſt therefore reſt ſatisfied with thoſe that are actually attainable, and, upon compariſon of them, muſt often ſacrifice the leſs advantageous to the more ſo—nay, ſubmit to inferior, to avoid ſuperior evils. The Church, while on earth, is militant, not triumphant, advancing towards, but not having yet attained perfection; its general conduct therefore, particularly its ſpiritual powers, muſt be limited by its preſent condition.

It ſhould ſeem then, even from our Saviour's celebrated defence almoſt immediately after the text, *my kingdom is not of this world*, that it was not his intention that the ſpiritual ſhould aim at being ſuperior to the temporal power; nay, ſhould they be found in the ſame hands, they ſhould be conſidered

ſidered as equally diſtinct as if they were in the poſſeſſion of different perſons. For though ſpiritual concerns muſt be effected by temporal means, otherwiſe they could not be promoted by men, yet muſt merely temporal intereſts never be advanced by conſiderations ſolely ſpiritual. The latter confer no more title to the former, than what would be valid without them: ſpiritual power likewiſe trenches not on temporal rights, whether in a ſupreme or ſubordinate member of ſociety.

It is indeed a lamentable circumſtance, when the temporal oppoſes the ſpiritual power; particularly when it regulates not its decrees by reaſon and juſtice. True, the voice of law, wherever it reſides, muſt be obeyed; but if its declarations be ſubverſive of generally acknowledged duties, or ſhould it prepoſterouſly countenance degrading and deſtructive vices, though an outward obedience might be paid to it, yet will it not fail of exciting inward repugnance. No; the ſtatutes of any nation may enjoin things indifferent to religion, but if they contradict or oppoſe it, a ready and ſincere obedience will ſcarcely be paid to them.

And can ſpiritual power ever control or oppoſe the dictates of right reaſon, or ſuſpend the

the practice of the duties enjoined by that very revelation from which it would be ſuppoſed to derive its authority? Really ſpiritual power cannot, but fictitious may. Such has been known to diſpenſe with the moſt ſacred engagements, to commit unjuſt violations of property, and to plead divine authority for the perpetration of the moſt horrid atrocities, to keep, *for merely human ends*, both body and ſoul under the moſt oppreſſive vaſſalage, and to exceed, in the ſeverity of the torments they inflicted, the moſt ſanguinary examples ever exhibited by temporal tribunals.

It were eaſy to illuſtrate this, from the hiſtory of, and meaſures purſued by, the Romiſh Church; but nowhere more apparently than in the annals of our own nation, as they coincide with thoſe of what are commonly called the middle ages. This was a period in which we, as well as almoſt all Europe, were under deplorable bondage to the Holy See; a period that has employed the pen of a noble author now no more, and of a Roman Catholic writer at preſent living. The latter blames the former, and endeavours to undermine his well-earned reputation, even when he would appear moſt to praiſe him. Indeed to obliterate the impreſſions juſtly conveyed by that valuable

valuable work, ſeems one principal reaſon for the latter publication; and, probably for a ſimilar purpoſe, the author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire labours, in a poſthumous production, to depreciate a work which, as far as it goes, is ſuperior to his own. Suffice it however to obſerve, that, while alive, the noble Hiſtorian was but another name for Virtue, and it augurs ill for any cauſe, that it opens with an attack upon acknowledged merit; nay, what may be ſuppoſed the eſpecial object of that writer, is rather impeded than promoted by it.

For, unfortunately, how little ſuited to vindicate the character of the Roman Catholic religion, is the period he has choſen for the ſubject of his hiſtory. It was the period when the ſchiſm in the Chriſtian world was occaſioned by there exiſting two infallible Biſhops of Rome at once[1], the ſucceſſors of the Fiſherman, treading upon the necks of Kings—when the joys of heaven were promiſed as motives to enſure obedience to the commands of the Papacy, while the pains of hell were denounced againſt ſuch as would not leave their country, their fortune, their

[1] Alexander and Victor.

family,

family, for the vain purpoſe of reſcuing the holy ſepulchre from the hands of Infidels—when the proud, bigotted, and ungrateful Becket, flew from the authority of his liege Lord, and ſheltering himſelf under that of a foreign Prince, defended what he called his ſpiritual rights, which were indeed no other than eccleſiaſtical uſurpations, forced from the reluctant hands of the immediately preceding monarchs—when, after the recent conqueſt of the kingdom, favours were to be liberally diſpenſed, and the powerful Churchmen were, at all events, to be reconciled to the victor, or, when rival claimants of the Crown afforded an opportunity to the ambitious, of ſelling at the higheſt price their aſſiſtance; the ſtruggles of virtue and reaſon were then unable to reſiſt ſuch encroachments as thoſe, which, if after ages had ſuffered them to remain, we ſhould at this time have had neither ſcience nor liberty.

[k] The dreadful vengeance then taken on ſuch well-meant attempts in the perſons of the Albigenſes, whoſe miſeries were more terrible than all that antient hiſtory records, and theſe inflicted immediately by, or at the ſug-

[k] Vide Berrington's Hiſtory of Henry II. p. 515.

geſtions

geſtions of a common parent, who only meant, it ſeems, by ſuch hard treatment, to correct, conſole, convert them (yet theſe innocent victims ſuffered for no other opinions, than what the Reformation afterwards proved both rational and tenable): all theſe inſtances demonſtrate this period moſt of all others pregnant with papiſtical encroachments. It was then in the full exertion of its moſt extravagant pretenſions to power, and then exhibited the moſt glaring examples of the abuſe of it, as they have indeed been generally eſteemed by ſuch as have been beſt qualified to judge of them. The attempt therefore to repreſent this era as conducive to the reputation of Roman Catholiciſm, is not only novel, but betrays as great a degree of caprice as of obſtinacy.

But this is the age of novelties. Formerly the arguments of Proteſtantiſm were atteſted by the beſt Roman Catholic writers: Eraſmus, Muratori, Thuanus, Giannoni, are as loud in execrating the abuſes of the See, falſely called Holy, as the moſt zealous Proteſtants; nor do they ſcreen its inſatiableneſs, its impurity, its tyranny, its total inconſiſtency with civil and religious liberty, its entire want of ſupport either in common ſenſe or ſound learning. Far different the purpoſes of the

writer at preſent conſidered, who prolongs his hiſtory two reigns beyond that of the noble author before mentioned, with this view (and an extraordinary one it is), that he may repreſent the tendency of the Roman Catholic religion, to advance the purpoſes of civil and religious liberty. Indeed when the whole realm conſiſted of Catholics, what merit they, as ſuch, could derive from exertions in its cauſe, is not eaſily imagined; and when homage was performed by our own Monarch, to a foreign eccleſiaſtical potentate, for the crown of theſe kingdoms, its political liberty ſeems not much to have been promoted. But homage, it ſeems, was a mere formality, an happy expedient to ſecure one ſtate from the depredations with which it was threatened by another: while under the ſheltering wing of the Church, invaders dared not aſſault it; and, the danger paſt, the protected might retire again, without loſs or injury as to right, power, and property.[k] So thought not the politic monarchs of theſe days: they never ſwore fealty to another, unleſs he had an indiſputable right, or unleſs they were forcibly

[k] Vide Berrington's Hiſtory of Henry II. p. 596. He calls it a nominal evil, which we could caſt off at pleaſure.

compelled

compelled to it.[1] The arts too of the Romiſh See were too well known, for any to truſt it farther than could be avoided. Its moſt favourite and neareſt Royal ſons would not ſuffer any of its decrees to have the force of laws in their dominions, without a previous examination, and an expreſs licence to that purpoſe. Theſe ſpiritual monarchs, too, were the more dangerous, inaſmuch as the life of a ſingle individual is too ſhort for any vaſt ſchemes of ambition; but an eccleſiaſtical ſtate, always exiſting, can ſupply the deficiency of one of its heads by the expertneſs of his ſucceſſor, is contemporary with the longeſt plan, and is ſure to avail itſelf, in the end, of the infirmity or inability of thoſe who, in the courſe of time, might riſe to oppoſe it. So thought the moſt enlightened and neareſt princes even in profeſſed ſubjection to the Court of Rome.

They therefore regarded with reluctance her advances towards immoderate power, oppoſed, and ſometimes ſucceſsfully impeded them; nay, often ſupported one head of the Church againſt another, beſieged the reigning pontif even in Rome itſelf, and more than

[1] It was called the Exæquatur regium. Vide Giannoni Iſtoria di Napoli, Vol. IV. p. 204.

once expelled him from it, and very deſervedly; for they who ſerved him moſt, were always ſure of being the leaſt rewarded. Spirited and reſolute kings they dreaded, but weak and wicked ones they effectually ſubdued to their purpoſes, by abſolving ſubjects from their oath of allegiance, by laying whole kingdoms under an interdict, or threatening them with the more dreadful ſentence of excommunication.

[m] For this affected civil as well as ſpiritual rights: ſubjects were liable to it, not for their own faults, but for thoſe of their Sovereigns. Inſtead of merely abſtaining from the ſociety of one under that ſentence (which was the only idea of excommunication appointed by the Apoſtles), the unhappy ſufferers could neither acquire nor poſſeſs any increaſe of property: the phyſician would ſcarcely approach him, his teſtimony was rejected in a court of juſtice, he could ſue for no debts, accept no legacy, nor inſiſt upon the performance of any agreement; and in caſe of death, his laſt teſtament was deprived of validity. After ſo many glaring inſtances (and hiſtory is full of the records of ſuch tyranny exerciſed by the

[m] See alſo Berrington's Hiſtory of Henry II. p. 163.

Romiſh

Romiſh Church), ſhall we be any longer told of its eſſential tendency to favour liberty?

The obtaining of the great charter in the time of King John, was indeed a ſignal triumph in its cauſe; and this our author vauntingly attributes to the Roman Catholics at that time: however, as has been already obſerved, the whole nation was ſo; they therefore, as ſuch, could derive but little merit from it. But for whom was it obtained? For the nobility, the knights, and higher order of the clergy: its benefits extended not to the lower orders, who notwithſtanding continued, like the cattle, to be transferred from one occupier to another; nay, one article of the charter expreſsly ſecures to the maſter the poſſeſſion of ſuch kind of property. Its influence too was almoſt as ſoon ſuſpended as obtained. Reſolute and enterpriſing princes ſucceeded to the crown of theſe realms, as regardleſs of the rights of their ſubjects, as of the threats of the See of Rome; and it was not till more modern times, that the effects of the grand charter were revived in that brighter diſplay of liberty, which the Revolution has given us to enjoy.

And it was an attainment with difficulty acquired, and which, therefore, cannot be too

highly prized; but it has been accompanied with ſuch alarming abuſes, ſo many have perverted it to baſe purpoſes, that, as in religion, ſo with reſpect to liberty, thoſe that pretend to moſt, have generally the leaſt regard for either. It is then moſt deſirable, when its comforts are inwardly felt, and its benefits outwardly experienced; "not when we are "told we want it," otherwiſe we ſhould not have known it: this, whether loſt or acquired, can very little influence our happineſs. It was of the former kind, that the noble author juſt mentioned was the able and ſtrenuous advocate, and he could reconcile being ſo with a juſtly conceived [n] *horror of popery:* but what kind of liberty that muſt be which his antagoniſt can reconcile with a profeſſed love for that corrupt and tyrannical form of religion, may be left to the determination of the impartial.

To their deciſion, likewiſe, we may ſubmit the queſtion, which of the two writers is the moſt conſiſtent: but to what ſhall we attribute the hatred of the latter to ſtate-religions, as he contemptuouſly calls them? Are they incompatible with liberty? or are they eſſen-

[n] Vide Preface to Berrington's Hiſtory of Henry II. p. 21.

tially

tially different from the eſtabliſhment of the Roman Catholic Church? If ſtate-religions are inconſiſtent with liberty, how comes the author to belong to one? for ſurely ſuch is that of Rome; and if ſhe alone is favourable to liberty, how came her ordinary meaſures ſo repugnant to it? The ſtate reaps this advantage from coaleſcing with religion, that they become reciprocally checks upon each other. Thoſe who poſſeſs ſpiritual rights, muſt needs be ſubject to thoſe endued with temporal power, that they may be a reſtraint upon them, leſt their conduct ſhould be unworthy of the divine commiſſion with which they are entruſted; and kings themſelves muſt be improved, from having the Goſpel truths regularly ſuggeſted to them. Hence their ſubjects of all ranks are rendered the happier, by the effect of ſuch gentle, yet efficacious interference. But the papal power, after arrogating to itſelf authority both ſpiritual and temporal, proceeded ſo far, as to endeavour to ſecure her own encroachments, by encouraging avaricious monarchs in their depredations on their ſubjects and others: nay, there is one inſtance on record, of one pontif, who propoſed to revive obſolete claims on the ſubjects of a

neighbouring king [o], and, to induce him to countenance them, offered to ſhare with him the profits. But even he, though a prince by no means inattentive to the calls of intereſt, yet could not but reject ſo infamous a propoſal. Is there then any conſiſtency in rendering the world indiſpoſed to ſtate-religions, capable of reſtraining both the contracting parties, and confining in ſome ſort each to their duty, and, at the ſame time, in pretending to juſtify an eſtabliſhment, where neither the temporal nor ſpiritual power is under any control; where aſſumed infallibility contradicts obvious truth, and where power pretending to be divine, and therefore implying perfection, is only conſpicuous in producing the moſt alarming and extravagant abuſes?

[p] The author boaſts of the ſucceſs of the Roman Catholic religion, in improving the laws. Alas! it encouraged ſingle combat, the ordeal, and acquittal according to the majority of compurgators (the court of the Inquiſition is purpoſely omitted, becauſe that muſt cloſe the argument at once, and more remains to be ſaid); where the conſideration

[o] Giannoni Iſtoria di Napoli.
[p] See Berrington's Hiſtory of Henry II. p. 638.

of

of the real merits of a queſtion was never attempted, nor wiſhed to be introduced. The improvement in juriſprudence, attributed to Chriſtianity in the laſt diſcourſe, was principally owing to the Eaſtern, not the Weſtern empire; Conſtantinople, not Rome, produced the Theodoſian, Juſtinian, and afterwards the Baſilian code. As to advancement in the arts, under the ſame religion, the ſpecimens ſtill ſurviving are exact, laboured, and minute, but are neither ſublime, ſpirited, nor comprehenſive [q]. In regard to the monks, too, though their merit might be unqueſtionable as copiers and preſervers of manuſcripts, yet ardour in collecting, diligence in multiplying, and liberality in communicating them, were wanting; nor even ſo did they atone for their indolence, inſociability, and all the deformed train of monaſtic vices. Their very numbers, and various orders, ſpoke their corruption; for more had been unneceſſary, had the firſt founded ſtrictly adhered to their reſpective *rules*. They and literature, therefore, were of different intereſts: they accordingly rendered the dark ages ſtill darker, till what remained

[q] See Appendix I. to Berrington's Hiſtory of Henry II. p. 616, 617.

mained of antient art and letters, retiring from the ſiege of Conſtantinople by the Turks, at laſt took ſhelter in Italy, where it excited general and merited approbation, and happily coinciding with a deſire of reformation, which the papal abuſes had occaſioned throughout the world, it contributed to thoſe effects, which the ages ſince have experienced and admired. For nearly at one and the ſame time the operations of nature were more minutely inveſtigated, our moſt holy religion revived, pure and refined from former taints and corruptions, and, by the application of the ſame accurate and extenſive erudition, even the grounds of civil and political liberty were then firſt fully developed and explained.

What therefore this author attributes to the Roman Catholics, is in reality the appropriate praiſe of Proteſtantiſm. The truth is, the former did not only not communicate knowledge, but made the moſt unjuſtifiable uſe of the little it had, as it were, monopolized. While men are men, ſtrong minds will influence weak ones; and though it ought not to be ſo, yet knowledge will generally avail itſelf of its powers to dupe and miſlead the ignorant. Now what does this conſideration, but point out the remedy for this incon-

inconvenience, which is to endeavour to diſſeminate knowledge, and to place mankind as nearly as poſſible on a level in this reſpect? And this Proteſtantiſm has all along laboured to effect, though it is ſtill contrary to the practice of the Romiſh Church; for to the former the laity are indebted not only that they can read, but that they have any thing to read. All the comfort and conſolation derived from the holy Scriptures, are to be aſcribed to the Reformation. This was a liberty with which the Romiſh Church had no notion of indulging ordinary Chriſtians. Formerly the loweſt of their Clergy in literary acquiſitions were not much above the loweſt of our preſent laity: now the middle ranks of the laity among us are capable of judging of the literary pretenſions of the higheſt of their Clergy; and from the moderately, or even deeply learned, neither the cauſe of true religion, of our Church, or of even real liberty, has any thing to fear. It is from the partially learned, or, what is worſe, from lettered wickedneſs, unduly influencing the well-diſpoſed, but comparatively ignorant (and ſuch the great maſs of the people will generally be found), that our religion, as well as every other

other important intereſt of humanity, has moſt to apprehend.

'The court of Rome had, and perhaps now has, an office for the licenſing of ſuch books as are ſuppoſed to be publiſhed under its authority. Through negligence, or corruption, or both, it has often happened that good books, not paying for the imprimatur, were prohibited, and bad ones, for which the permiſſion had been purchaſed, were edited. Hence in ſtates in communion with the Church of Rome, its imprimatur attracted no great veneration; and it became neceſſary, notwithſtanding that recommendation, to reviſe ſuch books ere they were ſuffered to be ſold. We have run into the contrary extreme. With us, in the kingdom at large, all books are publiſhed, whether good or bad, without undergoing a previous examination; nay, ſuch as, conſiſtently with its practice, even the Church of Rome herſelf would not have ſuffered to be printed. No; ſhe is too wiſe even implicitly to undermine her own eſtabliſhment; and the miſchief is, that they who live by writing regard not how much,

[r] Vide Giannoni, p. 432.

but

but thoſe who do not, care not how little they write. Yet it is incumbent on all who can, particularly to obviate the inſidious tendency of ſuch works as that of the author who has been conſidered in this diſcourſe, that the writers themſelves may not imagine they are practiſing thus unobſerved upon the unwary; that plain men may not conceive, becauſe *they* cannot readily anſwer a work replete with dangerous novelties, that therefore it is abſolutely unanſwerable; or that, becauſe it receives not an immediate reply, it actually admits of none; and that the generality of Papiſts themſelves may be made ſenſible of the inconſiſtency of thoſe to whom, perhaps, they have entruſted the conduct of their conſciences, and the guidance of their practice. To what conſiſtency, for inſtance, can our author pretend, who is ſo far betrayed by his new paſſion for liberty, as to praiſe two individuals for things directly contrary to each other; namely, Stephen Langton and Thomas à Becket; the latter of whom ſupported the Roman pontif againſt the king—whereas the former oppoſed him through the king. If Becket was right, Langton was indiſputably wrong; but if the ſaint was wrong, the cardinal was as certainly right. And whence

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in this author ſuch unſeemly zeal againſt eſtabliſhments, ſince every argument againſt them applies with equal force againſt the Church of Rome, of which, notwithſtanding, he profeſſes himſelf a faithful member, unleſs indeed his aim be firſt to deſtroy other religious eſtabliſhments, and afterwards to erect the Roman upon their ruins; which will then take place, when men ſhall be inclined to ſubſtitute for what is, in moſt reſpects, good, that which is infinitely worſe, in almoſt all views and conſiderations.

[s] Even the head of the latter Church, poſſeſſed, as he ſuppoſes himſelf, of powers eminently ſpiritual, is obliged, as his divine Maſter condeſcended to do in the text, to ſubmit to neceſſity; which, like the power of the Roman governor, is at leaſt permitted from above. Our author affirms, that our Saxon anceſtors were as obedient to the Roman See as our Norman: it was however to that Church not yet corrupted and polluted, but only receptive of thoſe ſeeds which afterwards ſprung up in ſuch rank luxuriance. Let it return to what it then was, and many pretenſions in its

[s] Vide Berrington's Hiſtory of Henry II. Appendix I. p. 525.

favour,

favour, as contained in the later hiſtory of our Henry the Second, would be acquieſced in. In [t] the time of Janſeniſm, the then reigning pontif only not conſented to eſtabliſh, as true, ſeveral propoſitions highly conſonant to Proteſtantiſm: this had been done, had not apparently human neceſſity ſtepped in, and coerced, as uſual, the ſuppoſed ſpiritual powers. The Jeſuits, it ſeems, had at that time ſignally ſerved the Roman See, in an intereſt that had to compromiſe with the ſtate of Venice: *their* friendſhip therefore, and the eſtabliſhment of the propoſition could not ſtand together, as they were the determined ſupporters of the opinions of their brother Molina, againſt the Janſeniſts; ſo that, leſt he might be taxed with ingratitude, the obnoxious decrees of the Trentine Council, though tottering to their fall, revived in all their priſtine vigour and abſurdity; and the ſo long expected propoſitions were never after heard of but in hiſtory. Lately, too, the head of the ſame Church condeſcended to accept of aſſiſtance from us, while we were able to afford it, who were before eſteemed heretics and aliens. Why ſhould not a ſimilar neceſſity, that cauſed his

[t] Vide Catechiſme du Janſeniſme.

predeceſſor

predeceſſor to ſuſpend a ſatisfactory meaſure, engage his ſucceſſor[u] to renew it; at leaſt he has nothing to fear from the ſcruples, in matters of religion, of the new ally lately forced upon him. Were ſomething like this done, the deſired conſiſtency, as well in the head of that Church, as in thoſe of its members who have lately renounced its moſt dangerous doctrines, might be obtained (for of the ſincerity of the generality there can be no doubt); though ſome have wiſhed to appear ſuch violent partizans in the cauſe of liberty. New civil privileges might then be granted, in proportion as pure and genuine Chriſtianity was reſtored. Inſtead of making a gain of ſubject nations, the really Catholic Church might be better employed in diffuſing the conciliatory ſpirit of extenſive charity and of univerſal benevolence, and the common faith would not have reaſon to number among its enemies thoſe who profeſs to be moſt firmly attached to it. The pontif of Rome would have no more concern in the temporal intereſts of this country, than the primate of our Church has in thoſe of Italy; yet both might, in their reſpective neceſſities, reciprocally aſſiſt each

[u] Buonaparte.

other;

other; nay, one golden chain of love, concord, harmony, might embrace the whole Chriſtian world. Not only *nation would not riſe up againſt nation*, but different churches would forget their conteſts, diſputes, and diſſenſions, till they ſhould in the end become, according to their original deſign, *one flock under one ſhepherd, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

SERMON VII.

ACTS xxii. 28.

But I was free born.

IN the laſt diſcourſe there was occaſion to mention the two powers; the ſpiritual and the temporal. The preſent will require that the ſpiritual and the eccleſiaſtical ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from each other, and their limits duly aſcertained. By ſpiritual power then is meant that with which men are inveſted by the ſupreme Being, or by Chriſt in obedience to him; by eccleſiaſtical, ſuch as ſtates and kings have condeſcended to confer on the church and its miniſters: ſuch as were certain privileges, ſomewhat ſimilar to thoſe on which St. Paul prides himſelf in the text, or certain ſpecies of property, with which, ſince the extenſive adoption of Chriſtianity, it has pleaſed the rulers of this world to endow, or even enrich it.

The former kind cannot, as it is ſaid, be exerciſed but by thoſe who, in regular ſucceſſion, have been ordained to it; but this notion ſeems to have ariſen more from preſcription than from actual impoſſibility. Order, however, and decency, as well as obedience to cuſtom, from the time of the Apoſtles, and conformity to the divine commiſſion, actually delivered to the prieſthood from our Saviour himſelf, require that a particular body of men ſhould be generally ſeparated to ſuch ſacred ſervices; and though the apparently diſtinct powers are but ſpecies of that which was originally derived from above, and are conſequently compatible, yet our ſovereigns have wiſely abſtained from interfering with the ſpiritual, contenting themſelves ſolely with the juriſdiction over the eccleſiaſtical ſtate within their dominions.

If ſome of their pretenſions ſeem to inſinuate more than this, it is owing to the ſimilar claims of the court of Rome. For though, at firſt view, it might be thought abſurd to ſuppoſe a weak or wicked prince to be endued with ſpiritual powers, yet the popes were but men likewiſe, earthly potentates, excelling in refined policy and in extenſive ambition—the moſt enterprizing of merely ſecular princes, and

and the worſt kings that this nation has ever obeyed, might as ſafely have been truſted with divine powers, as many biſhops of Rome that might be mentioned, or as many prieſts, who have unfortunately diſgraced the common faith, and impiouſly perverted the purpoſes of their profeſſion.

But there can be no objection to the eccleſiaſtical power, as already defined, reſiding in the ſupreme governor of a ſtate; elſe he would be king over his ſubjects in one reſpect, and not ſo in another, and would find ſophiſtry and ſedition contrive ſo to confound temporal with ſpiritual claims, that by degrees his entire authority would be ſurreptitiouſly taken from him. Chriſt, it is true, declared, *that his kingdom was not of this world*; but it is of the inviſible, not the viſible, that he was then ſpeaking; the latter, as conſiſting of men of all countries, conditions, qualities, and deſcriptions, he never could intend to withdraw from the power of the civil magiſtrate, otherwiſe the utmoſt diſcord and confuſion had enſued. Nay, as juſt and equitable government is the deſign of Providence, the rule indeed to which he accommodates his own meaſures, there can be no impropriety, where the ends are the ſame, that the two powers, the temporal and the

ſpiritual, ſhould combine for the attainment of them. Again, as religion is the friend of rational liberty, nor ſubjects us to abſurd reſtraint, there can be no reaſon why ſhe ſhould refuſe ſuch aid, defence, and even eſtabliſhment, as the civil magiſtrate ſhall be inclined to beſtow upon her. The Apoſtle in the text thought not that his ſacred character exempted him from enjoying a civil privilege, the right of Roman citizenſhip; why then ſhould not a number of individuals, when united in a ſociety, in a church for inſtance, accept them, when they are offered, or may be otherwiſe obtained?

But "Chriſtianity, it ſeems, flouriſhed "many years without ſuch aids. It was de- "rived at firſt from its divine Author per- "fect; human additions therefore are not "improvements, but incumbrances:" yet it has ſince flouriſhed longer under them, than it did ere it had acquired them. Even the works of God are limited by the end to be promoted by them. If he intended his religion ſhould, after a certain period, be actually thus ſupported, its authenticity cannot be diſproved by its attaining that very advantage. If all that comes from God muſt be abſolutely perfect, and admit of no improvement

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or alteration, the Jewiſh diſpenſation muſt have ſtill continued; nor could the Chriſtian have ſucceeded it. The eſſential doctrines of the Goſpel, indeed, remain the ſame to-day, yeſterday, and for ever; but its accidental regulations depend upon times, places, and events, according to the different circumſtances of the ſeveral ſtates which have embraced it. Such of its inſtitutions therefore are to be eſtimated, not by an imaginary idea of perfection, but as they coincide with ſuch ſucceeding changes, and ſuch continually recurring neceſſity.

The temporal power, though it might certainly ſubſiſt without the ſpiritual, yet it could not ſo effectually promote its beſt purpoſes when ſolitary, as when aſſociated with it; but the latter could ſtill leſs diſpenſe with the aid afforded to it by the former. What pains and torments did the martyrs and firſt Chriſtians undergo, merely becauſe their religion was not profeſſed by the temporal powers [w]! And though they thus gave the moſt indiſputable proof of their ſincerity, yet how much did it tend to its further propagation, that the kings of the earth afterwards aſſiſted and ſup-

[w] Vide Hooker, paſſim.

ported it! There was as much propriety *then* in the preſence of ſuch patronage, as there was before in its abſence. Miracles had ceaſed, nothing remained to recommend it, but ſuperior purity of morals in thoſe who profeſſed it, and the abſolutely ſpiritual conſiderations which it inculcated; all its other ſources of authority were founded on the generoſity and on the ſupport it met with from thoſe in whoſe realms it was at length encouraged and embraced. As the Pagan prieſts had all along appropriate revenues aſſigned to them, it ſeemed but natural that thoſe of the true religion ſhould not be in this reſpect inferior to them. Freſh events called for freſh regulations, not aſcribable to the genius of the Goſpel, but to continual errors and abuſes ariſing among thoſe who profeſſed it, till at length the evil proceeded ſo far as to corrupt and ſubvert the very eſſentials of religion, as well as to be highly injurious to the ſeveral political ſtates which had hitherto ſupported it: for the Roman prelates, inſtead of reſting ſatisfied with being ſubject to the temporal power, at length uſurped it, and, inſtead of receiving as a favour a decent maintenance, appropriated to themſelves, under a pretence of promoting Chriſtianity, royal revenues, and

ſubſtituted

ſubſtituted in ſupport of their claims, for the mild methods of reaſon and perſuaſion, the more violent ones of force and perſecution.

It was to confirm the benefits accruing from the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, as well as to remedy the evils occaſionally ariſing from it, that the Reformation gave birth to, and multiplied the regulations, that are at preſent in force in this kingdom with reſpect to it; wherefore then urge the inexpediency of theſe inſtances of reform, by pointing out the times when they were neither introduced nor known? The reaſon is, that the abuſes which called for them, and to which they were ſubſequently applied, did not then exiſt; wherefore defend Roman Catholiciſm, becauſe ſome of its now obnoxious doctrines were at firſt profeſſed even by Proteſtants? For as Chriſtianity itſelf did not immediately obtain general acceptance, ſo neither was the entire reformation of it immediately effected: all the further improvements and reſtrictions that have ſince been introduced for its protection and continuance, aroſe from the ſubſequent attempts to weaken, fruſtrate, and ſubvert it.

And if Chriſtianity in general has need of temporal ſupport, ſo eſpecially, after its having been reformed, is ſuch aid neceſſary; ſince

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it has not only much to apprehend from vice, folly, and ignorance in general, but likewiſe from open or concealed enemies, who are even multiplied, from envy, at its being thus countenanced. Yet it cannot accept the advantage maliciouſly allowed it by its adverſaries; namely, that it is permitted merely becauſe it has the voice of the majority in its favour. This it would gladly procure and retain, yet it reſts not its pretenſions to preference on that ground ſolely; for its right to eſtabliſhment would ſtill remain the ſame, even were the majority againſt it. Nay, it is againſt the poſſibility of ſuch a majority, that ſuch guards and fences are neceſſary: and theſe it claims, as dependent on that general idea of law, the firſt prototype of which is the Deity himſelf[x]; which, though founded in reaſon, yet is ſtill a reſtraint, and therefore not likely to engage the affections of the multitude; its principles beſides are ſuch as they would not conſider, perhaps have not abilities to comprehend. Modes of worſhip, therefore, where men heap to themſelves what teachers they will, or where abſolution may be purchaſed for almoſt any crime, and where they may

[x] Vide Hooker, paſſim.

diſburthen

diſburthen their conſciences by attending to a number of idle and frivolous ceremonies, are more likely to attract the regard of the majority, than thoſe which require a generally accurate moral conduct, which profeſs to be directed by right reaſon, and propoſe no other means of procuring the divine favour, than the practice of pure and genuine piety [y]. Thoſe too who allow them the voice of the majority, only intend to avail themſelves of it when they ſhall, in their turn, have gained it on their ſide; and at which, it may be preſumed, they aim, from their boaſting of *millions* being of their opinion, and from the pains they take in making proſelytes. But ſhould they ſucceed, ſtill the difference between Proteſtantiſm and other modes of religion will remain on the ſame baſis as before; namely, ſuperiority in reaſoning, and preponderancy of argument.

But this venerated majority, where is it, or of whom does it conſiſt? Could it be aſcertained, or rendered more permanent, or in uniſon with itſelf, its decrees were certainly more binding and reſpectable; but fictitious majorities are here to-day and gone to-morrow; the ſucceeding have been often known

[y] Church and State.

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to determine the direct contrary to the preceding; thoſe that might be ſuppoſed to form a real and legitimate majority are too wiſe to ſuffer the truth or falſehood of their opinion to depend merely on its popularity, too modeſt to ſolicit abettors, or too well convinced to require the aid of numbers to give weight to a well-founded determination. How different the ſo much boaſted of majorities, who are influenced not by the reaſonableneſs of the meaſure, but by the good or ill ſucceſs of it; who generally coincide in ſentiment with the laſt ſpeaker, the greater part of whom, like the Epheſian multitude, *know not wherefore they are gathered together*; whom cunning men mould and faſhion to their own purpoſes, and that the more eaſily the more numerous they are! It is to remedy ſuch inconveniences, that the beſt governments have, inſtead of thoſe too ductile conſtituents, admitted to a ſhare of power their repreſentatives, who are often known, for their real intereſt and happineſs, to determine the direct contrary to the biaſſed and prejudiced inclinations of their principals.

[z] We have, it ſeems, a parliamentary reli-

[z] Church and State, p. 542.

gion;

gion; not quite that—but an eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment, ſanctioned by the laws of the land, which our adverſaries would fain have if they could; nay, they would entitle themſelves to it by repreſenting their religion as the only true one. Well, then, if they allow Chriſtianity, as ſuch, to have a claim to the ſupport of the civil magiſtrate, upon that queſtion we are fairly at iſſue; we will reſt our pretenſions to preference on the ſuperior purity of Proteſtantiſm, on its comparatively greater correſpondence with the Goſpel in eſſential, and with reaſon and common ſenſe in accidental circumſtances.

But though we may aſſent to the propoſition, that genuine religion may, and ought to be ſupported by the temporal power (indeed it is upon that ground only that we accept of aid for our own, which, as a branch of Proteſtantiſm, we ſhall not fail to aſſert to be a part of the really Chriſtian Church); yet, after what has been ſaid, it will hardly be expected that another popular opinion ſhould be admitted as an axiom, that all [a] power is in the people. All force certainly is, ſhould they unite in exerting it: the idea of power, how-

[a] Church and State, paſſim.

ever,

ever, ſuggeſts ſomething of reaſon and equity; but when they boaſt of force excluſively, they ſeem to wave all other conſiderations. There is a difficulty, and that apparently inſurmountable, in the idea of their being the centre of power, or rather of government [b]; namely, if they are ſo, to anſwer the queſtion, who are the governed? It is ſaid, that ours being a ſtate-religion, what conferred upon us our proviſion can, if it pleaſes, reſume it. Equally with that of other ſubjects; but this can in neither caſe be done with juſtice; for the preſervation of property is one of the principal ends for which ſociety was inſtituted; and whenever the ſtate ſhall act ſo arbitrarily as to diſregard it, we could not cheerfully acquieſce in ſuch a ſtep, though it were the will of the majority: we ſhould therefore reſiſt it by all legal methods: both our hearts and our pens would be engaged in reſtoring the legiſlature to a better mind; but we ſhould not hypocritically own the juſtice of the ſentence as thus decreed, and at the ſame time write againſt it.

Yet this is not the crime with which the Clergy of our Church are charged. No, they

[b] Church and State, p. 555.

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are too much attached to government, as an image of that law and order which, though occaſionally obſcured, yet primarily reſide in the boſom of the Deity: not one in an hundred is a partizan of ſedition, or even of oppoſition. Much to our honour. We are enough convinced of the evil of party, ever in the leaſt to countenance it. Peace we ſeek, peace we promote in our public and private provinces. We do not complain that the power of the ſword is denied us; but our ſincere prayer to God is, that all mankind would live together in unity and godly love. We teach no man, however wicked, to deſpair of the divine mercy. Of the imperfections of all human inſtitutions we are ſufficiently appriſed, and charitably hope, while the eſſentials of the conſtitution are preſerved, that, whoever guides the helm, the ſafety of the political veſſel, even admitting occaſional faults and errors, is not entirely to be deſpaired of.

Notwithſtanding the confidence of ſome Roman Catholic writers, who would repreſent thoſe of their profeſſion as the actual champions in the cauſe of civil and religious liberty, yet it was found, when there was a real neceſſity for exertion, none were more ſtrenuous in

in their defence of it, than this our Proteſtant Clergy and Epiſcopacy. When the [c] ſage of the law lamented, that he had nearly ſurvived both that and the conſtitution, in conſequence of the tyrannical meaſures of a Popiſh king, directed by a Popiſh confeſſor, it was our ſacred band, that, uniting with a real and enlightened majority, took the lead in an event that revived and reſtored the injured rights of mankind, conferred honour on themſelves and on their lateſt poſterity, and ſhall for ever endear the Britiſh name to all lovers of rational religion, and of practical, becauſe duly limited liberty.

A decent warmth on this occaſion cannot be miſplaced, which has been excited by a book lately publiſhed, intitled, *Church and State*; a work, particularly at this time, of moſt dangerous tendency. It is not an hiſtory: indeed one knows not what to call it; except we ſay, that it boldly fills up the outline timidly traced by the Roman Catholic writer of the Hiſtory of Henry the Second. The principles in the body of the work are thoſe that have already been conſidered in this

[c] Serjeant Maynard.

diſcourſe:

diſcourſe: omitting, therefore, his moſt curious account of [d] tythes (which, as he ſtates it, no law, as now explained by cuſtom, allows, neither are the Clergy ſo exorbitant as to demand them to ſuch an extent), his promptitude to charge others with bigotry, and ſuch offenſive appellations, his [e] ſhameful defamation of a learned Prelate [f], who in his time poſſeſſed a moſt extraordinary genius, and was generally right in his poſitions, though an argument or two might be ill-founded—proceed we, in the laſt place, principally to conſider the Appendix, which clearly diſcovers the deſign of the whole work, and which, had the learned object of our author's obloquy ſtill ſurvived, had afforded an ample field for the exerciſe of the talent in which he particularly excelled; namely, that of detecting inconſiſtencies. Indeed to one at all converſant in our hiſtory, it muſt appear ſtrange, that, after the enemies of our eſtabliſhment had all along continued to tax it with a ſtill too cloſe imitation of Popery, it ſhould at laſt be diſcovered that they and the Roman Catholics meant the ſame thing, were equally enemies to ſtate-religions, or, which is much the ſame, were

[d] Church and State, p. 323.
[e] Ibid. p. 411.
[f] Biſhop Warburton.

equally deſirous of ſupplanting that which boaſts itſelf, though not excluſively, to be the true one. All this appeared myſterious, till the Appendix reſolved the difficulty, by declaring the Roman Catholic religion a friend to a party, too ludicrous to be mentioned in a ſerious diſcourſe, formerly reſpectable indeed, but now by ſome eſteemed as no better than another name for ſedition. It is not at preſent eaſy to perceive how it can be an objection to one mode of religion, that it is eſtabliſhed, and at the ſame time a recommendation to another, that it naturally connects itſelf with a popular party. But the true Chriſtian is of none; his aim is to promote the good of his country, or rather of all mankind; which can never happen through the ſubverſion of religion, now, alas! too much to be apprehended, unleſs its preſent dangers ſhould call down freſh aids from above. But no wonder a party-man ſhould extol the deciſion of the multitude, ſince it is the very ſeal and token of ſuch aſſociations, that a man renounces his private reaſon and opinion to obey the determination of the majority; this being the only way of forcing the party into notice or conſequence.

With what an ill grace, then, does the charge

charge of *temporizing* proceed from the pen of ſuch a writer, which is, as he defines it, complying with the prevailing opinion, though contrary to a man's own, for the ſake of preſent emolument; as if the Prelates of Rome never temporized. He ſtigmatizes with this charge an [f] eminent Proteſtant writer, now living, who certainly merits it not either from him or any other Roman Catholic, ſince his literary labours have been principally employed, and ſucceſsfully too, in vindicating the character of an unfortunate princeſs of that perſuaſion, and in expoſing the arts of her malicious rival, in procuring her deſtruction; an act which no policy can juſtify, no words can palliate. He condemns the party rage ſo violent at the commencement of the preſent century, when he ſays the groundleſs alarm was excited of the Church being in danger; as if the one at preſent propagated, of the ſubject's liberty being in ſimilar peril, was not equally the artifice of the ſame ſpirit. Daring encroachments produce ſtrong meaſures; and when we cannot traverſe our ſtreets, travel on our public roads, or reſt in our beds in ſafety, from the exceſſes of an ill-regulated freedom,

[f] Whitaker. Vide Church and State, notes, p. 581.

the conſequence is much the ſame as if we were under the moſt inexorable tyranny. And to what is this owing, but to that phrenſy of the multitude, which, as an excellent author obſerves, is ſo unaccountably and invariably converted to the benefit of the few? [g] He apologizes, as a lawyer, for meddling with theology: it is a general concern, and therefore no excuſe is neceſſary: but his ſtrictures in the body of the book, on our Articles, are certainly out of his province; it is a matter between the ſubſcriber to them, and his conſcience. Here, therefore, an apology had been decorous; perhaps it had been more ſo, to have omitted the obſervations altogether.

[h] The opinion of our author, and the one conſidered in the former diſcourſe, are ſomewhat different with reſpect to the Inquiſition: the latter fairly gives it up, as inconſiſtent with the reputation of any government, and a diſgrace to any religion; the former, though he condemns it, yet lays the blame even of that inſtitution ſtill upon a ſtate-religion. This is the phantom that haunts him, the cauſe of every ill; and its removal, as he thinks, would be attended with that of every other calamity:

[h] Church and State, p. 381. [i] Ibid. p. 609.

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as if, with reſpect to a bad meaſure, the queſtion was, who was ſubject to it, not who invented, ſuggeſted, encouraged it. The magnanimity of the Engliſh Roman Catholics is extolled, as if they, excluſively of other ſubjects, reſiſted its introduction into theſe kingdoms. Alas! they had no power to prevent it; but it was contrary to the principles of our conſtitution, either in Church or State, to endure the very name of it. Had it depended upon them, they muſt, conſiſtently with the genius of their religion, like many other nations in communion with the See of Rome, have bowed their necks to this galling and tormenting yoke.

Thus much for this author, and for, as he thinks it, his unanſwerable work; the alarming danger to be apprehended from which muſt apologize for its having detained us ſo long. For a ſingle wicked act and its conſequences end when the perpetrator has ſatisfied that juſtice which he has provoked; but wicked principles are perpetually productive: againſt them the ſword of the magiſtrate is drawn in vain; and when inveterate, the pen of the writer, or voice of the preacher, are often ineffectually employed to ſuppreſs

them. But this age has ſeen not only principles ſeparately directed to the ruin of our common faith, but jointly and ſyſtematically contributing their efforts to that purpoſe. The ſcheme has been a long while formed, or there never were ſuch manifeſt ſigns of its having been ſo: the ſprings of moral ſcience, as contained in general hiſtory and in the Scripture, are tainted and corrupted. Voltaire began with expoſing to ridicule the moſt ſacred ſubjects; Prieſtley followed, and by mutilation and interpolation attempted to overturn the doctrine of the ſoul's immortality, and to baniſh all myſtery from revelation; furniſhing a ſpecimen how the Scripture might be made to ſupport any tenet or opinion, according to the inclination of the perſon who adduces it. Gibbon has attacked with ſarcaſm and irony what has hitherto ſtood the teſt of reaſon and ſound argument. Berrington, contrary to an opinion that has ſubſiſted ever ſince the Reformation, endeavours to make Roman Catholiciſm palatable, and to reconcile its errors and abuſes with juſtice, liberty, liberality: and afterwards Plowden cloſes the ſcene with an attempt to prove all eſtabliſhments inconſiſtent with religion, while he recommends his own

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[k] as readily coaleſcing with a particular party; from which what can follow but error, confuſion, and every evil work. Alas, Chriſtianity! ſince we ſee that the diſſolution of the union, that naturally ſubſiſts between regular government and true religion, can only tend to deſtroy both; God's viſible Church therefore muſt be materially injured; and, unleſs he had promiſed the contrary, be in the end totally extirpated by it. Our ardour, diligence, and perſeverance in defending it, can only be excited by the proſpects ſupplied by the idea of the inviſible Church, to be repreſented now indeed only to the eye of faith, but which we know is founded on the purpoſe of God; which no power can change, no occurrences, human or divine, poſſibly prevent. This, under all circumſtances, whether the face of the preſent world cheers or diſmays, whether its events combine to vex, or even for the preſent to ruin us; whether we want or whether we abound, are eſtabliſhed or only tolerated, privileged or unprivileged, ſlaves or free-born —this will ſtill ſurvive, and remain our unperiſhing conſolation, our unfading glory, and inexhauſtible ſource of joy.

[k] Appendix, ibidem, p. 583.

SERMON VIII.

HEBREWS xi. 16.

For he hath prepared for them a city.

THE plan of theſe diſcourſes approaches its termination; and what topic can better anſwer that purpoſe, than the conſideration of that bleſſed and eternal ſtate to which Chriſtianity opens ſo bright and reviving a proſpect, which is the really chief good of man, and which, connecting itſelf with the preſent ſcene, forms an whole at once complete and ſatisfactory, reſolving every difficulty, and overcoming every poſſible objection. All ſurrounding objects, as well as the infirmity of our own frame, convince us of the periſhing condition of this world: how abſurd, then, to encourage hopes of permanent happineſs here, when we have more reaſonable grounds for the expectation of it hereafter! Our ſouls admit of improve-

improvement, and are impreſſed with deſires more than neceſſary to, and beyond what can be ſatisfied in, a mortal ſtate: there is therefore doubtleſs another arriving, in which our legitimate wiſhes ſhall be accompliſhed, and our aſpiring nature will attain its deſigned perfection.

All eſtimation of ourſelves, or of the world which we inhabit, will be incomplete, unleſs it is accompanied with conſiderations of the other; which ſurely are ſufficiently important, nay glorious, to engage our moſt ſerious attention, did we not ſurmiſe that our ſins and iniquities had deprived us of the power of ſuppoſing ourſelves capable of them. Hence the pains of popular and licentious writers, as well the profeſſed foes as the falſe and pretended friends of religion, to undermine and miſrepreſent thoſe hopes as extravagant which they have ſpurned and rejected themſelves; and, being expoſed to the probability of miſery, that others ſhould expect to be eternally bleſſed, is more than they have patience to endure. Thus they deprive themſelves, and thoſe in the ſame wretched ſituation, of the only remaining remedy; namely, repentance and amendment of life. Nor is a future admittance into the heavenly city incompatible with the

the comforts and conveniencies of this life, when innocent and ſuitable to our reſpective ſituations. However, the enjoyment of them muſt never interfere with our great and eternal reward, but muſt be always rendered ſubſervient to the attainment of it. Virtue, learning, liberty, are the moſt eminent of earthly advantages; yet only ſo when they are acquired, practiſed, enjoyed under a ſenſe of religion. Virtue, without the aid of Chriſtianity, is a glaring unſubſtantial meteor, neither permanently brilliant, nor in the event advantageous. Learning, too, without this its indiſpenſable aſſociate, far from profiting, is rendered highly prejudicial to ſociety; and a love of liberty becomes mere licentiouſneſs, unleſs ſuch a privilege is conſidered as the gift of God, who may be ſuppoſed as well to approve of its rational enjoyment, as to diſcountenance its abſurd and multiplied abuſes.

If Prieſts, as it has been objected to them, have been all along in league with earthly governments for the ſubverſion of freedom, their ſucceſs has been very inconſiderable; in this reſpect the men of the world have been always an overmatch for the men of religion. As far as profane hiſtory is concerned, few Prieſts or none have rendered themſelves conſpicuous

ſpicuous as kings or conquerors: the Roman Catholic faith, indeed, has exemplified, in modern times, the power of religious prejudice, and of the monopoly of learning, to bend the human mind to the moſt abject ſlavery; but aſſertions with reſpect to that corrupted Church, cannot at all reach a pure and reformed religion.

In this ſtate of probation to which we are at preſent ſubjected, it is likewiſe found that the moſt learned are not always the moſt virtuous; yet even they excite the diligence of others, though learned, yet religious, as well to qualify themſelves for *anſwering thoſe who aſk them a reaſon for the faith that is in them*, as to counteract the deſigns of its enemies, and to refute, with equal pains to thoſe employed on the contrary ſide, the objections that are continually brought againſt it. Not many wiſe, ſays the Apoſtle, are called; that the ſucceſs of the Goſpel might not be attributed to human counſel or contrivance, which are as often engaged on the ſide of vice as on that of virtue. Superior mental accompliſhments are likewiſe too apt to produce pride and preſumption; which, as they are far from congenial to the manners of the heavenly city, ſo they have been known to expel from a ſimilar

ſituation

ſituation beings of a ſuperior order to ourſelves. Nor is learning neceſſarily connected with freedom. All human ſcience aroſe like the ſun in the eaſt; yet thoſe extenſive regions, though under his riſing beams, have never been cheriſhed by them into freedom. The moſt famous and moſt copious libraries firſt appeared in Africa, under the Ptolemies, whoſe power was more abſolute than we of this nation can poſſibly conceive. The golden age of Roman literature was likewiſe that of tyranny. So again, when an univerſal night had buried all arts and ſciences, they revived, together with chemiſtry and medicine, among the Arabians, the confeſſed victims of Mahometan deſpotiſm; and modern Europe owes more, even in the arts, the mathematics, and in natural philoſophy, to one nearly lawleſs monarch [1], than the whole world to all the republics that have ever exiſted.

And this is ſaid with an intention of combating the now ſo common aſſertion, that to be free it is neceſſary that we ſhould be illumined with greater, and perhaps different knowledge, than that which has hitherto appeared; or, in other words, that there has been from remoteſt ages a conſpiracy exiſting of the learned againſt the illiterate, to oppreſs and

[1] Lewis XIV.

enſlave

enſlave the latter; and that, were ſcience univerſally diſſeminated, the bonds of this ſervitude would immediately be diſſolved, and the whole human race would be regenerated, as it were, to truth, virtue, and liberty[m].

But we ſee the world around us exhibiting incontrovertible ſigns of decay. Thoſe who have preceded us on this terreſtrial theatre, at the longeſt have not remained long; and ourſelves, by diſorders, indiſpoſitions, and the failure of our faculties, are continually, as we advance, reminded that we are but ſtrangers and pilgrims, that we muſt ſoon follow the appointed path trod by our predeceſſors, and make our exit alſo. As to letters too, how can a general inclination to them be excited among many, who ſeem neither diſpoſed nor qualified for their attainment? It is only from a few being enabled to confine themſelves to the purſuits of learning, that any progreſs at all can be made in its various branches. Were all to attempt it, they muſt ſoon relinquiſh the ſcheme, as their ordinary wants and neceſſities would interrupt and divert them from it. The moſt eminently accompliſhed likewiſe find in this earthly ſtate, with what pains, and to how ſmall a degree ſcience is acquired, and how ſoon years and infirmities ſteal away the

[m] Vide Condorcet's Progreſs of the Human Mind, p. 62.

knowledge

knowledge which is derived from faculties, the extraordinary uſe and exerciſe of which too often impairs and deſtroys them; a ſorrowful conſideration indeed, did not reaſon, ſtrengthened by revelation, thence infer the futility of relying upon any permanent advantages here, and derive from it a firm and certain hope, that the diligent uſe of our at preſent imperfect talents will prepare us for more valuable and infinitely higher degrees of knowledge hereafter; *for now we ſee through a glaſs darkly; but then ſhall we know, even as alſo we are known.*

[n] As then men do not, have not, nay cannot, under the preſent ſtate of nature, proceed from virtue to learning, and from learning to liberty, why they do not can only be explained by the ſuppoſition of a better ſtate ſubſequent to the preſent; and in this view our world, if not abſolutely the beſt poſſible, yet is ſo perhaps, when conſidered relatively to the other. The diviſion of mankind into the wiſe and ignorant, is not the effect of deſign; it is the neceſſary conſequence of the preſent circumſtances of their being: but they have arranged themſelves into diſtinct claſſes; namely, the good and the bad. On this diſtinction

[n] Condorcet, p. 116.

religion

religion builds her ſanctions, which however ſhe endeavours to ſoften, obviating, by the doctrine of repentance, the neceſſity of puniſhment, and comprehending, through her gracious promiſes, all within the circle of her glorious recompenſes.

And who ſees not, how incompatible with ſuch a ſtate, with ſuch hopes and expectations of futurity, are thoſe abſtract ideas of perfection, that are now ſo commonly attributed to mankind? Were all equally virtuous or learned, no degree of liberty would be too much for them; their right to be conſidered as equals in this reſpect, would be unimpeachable; and all they could obtain by force (if force were neceſſary) would be juſtifiable on the grounds of reaſon: but under ſuch a deſcription the preſent world would be too good for them, and under their exiſting circumſtances, for the glorious city, and that bleſſed ſtate which Chriſtianity teaches us to expect, it is to be feared they are at preſent not good enough. Their rights therefore muſt be circumſcribed, their liberty in ſome degree abridged, and their natural privileges parted with, as they actually are, when the exerciſe of them is delegated to others, even at the very inſtant when they are owned and acknowledged.

In

In the actual ſtate of man, his affections for terreſtrial objects muſt be checked, and directed towards celeſtial. His paſſions muſt be controlled, not inflamed, and ſources of comfort and conſolation muſt be ſought in humility and ſubmiſſion, not in pride and preſumption; and all rules of conduct propoſed to him muſt be regulated by this idea. All other plans of education, inſtruction, or legiſlation, however they may boaſt of being conſonant to nature, will be found repugnant to his, as well as to that of the univerſe itſelf, of which he is a component part.

The exiſtence of falſe religions affords no proof that all are falſe: a counterfeit is but a ſtronger argument of the reality of an original. Falſe religions might conſpire with the inventions of politicians, to effect merely ſtate purpoſes; but Chriſtianity could not, as it aroſe not from any ſudden emergency; nor could any intermediate period be aſſigned for giving birth to it; but it was the effect of a continued ſcheme, ſucceſſively carried on even from the fall of man to the preſent day. Had there been any interruption, inconſiſtency, or accommodation of it to any particular or private ends, it muſt have been diſcovered, by applying to general hiſtory, as well as to the

ſeries of prophecies to which it appeals in its ſupport. Neither the Law, nor the Goſpel in courſe ſucceeding it, intentionally admit of a popular and myſterious ſenſe. It is true, that the records of them are contained in what are now called learned languages: but no one order of Prieſts, eſpecially in the reformed Churches, underſtands more than another. Holy orders, if there is no impediment as to morality, are conferred on men of all ranks. If the Laity underſtand not as much as the Clergy, it is owing not to deſign, but merely to accident. We are ready to teach all we know to thoſe that apply to us; and if any will be at the pains to ſurmount the difficulties of the ſame languages, there can be no objection to their acquiring as much of religious knowledge as ourſelves: nay, as the fountains of divine Grace are alike open to all the members of Chriſt's myſtical body, ſhould that be afforded to any Layman in a larger proportion than to a Clergyman, he may poſſibly be thence enabled even to know more.

Theſe ſuggeſtions are excited by the peruſal of a literary work of a once celebrated French [a] Eſſayiſt, intended to countenance and con-

[a] Condorcet on the Mind.

firm

firm the new opinions, now, alas! too prevalent, and in diſparagement of all religion whatever; in which he takes occaſion to attribute to all Prieſts alike, from the very beginning, the ſame ſelfiſh deſigns againſt the welfare, comfort, and liberty of the reſt of mankind, and taxes them with a ſimilar and conſtantly preſerved caution againſt truſting them with more knowledge than they could poſſibly help. The exiſtence of the double doctrine, one for the initiated, another for the profane, he endeavours to prove from the Egyptian hieroglyphics; which he would repreſent as originally the invention of the ſacred order, to anſwer that purpoſe. But they were intended to record events, or to communicate ſentiments to all thoſe that were capable of underſtanding them; they were therefore of the ſame uſe then, that alphabetic writing is of now. As well then might a man, totally devoid of education, affirm, that all that is written is the ſame myſtery to others as it is to himſelf; as this author contends that all that is contained under hieroglyphics, was, at the time of its being repreſented by them, myſtery, and known only to ſome particular perſons, entruſted with the ſecret. The ſuperiority that has been remarked, of alphabetic writing to hieroglyphics,

phics, is equally applicable to Chriſtianity, when compared with a German mode of natural religion recently introduced [b]; ſince at this time of day all ſyſtems are accounted preferable to the revealed. Alphabetic writing, then, after it had been invented, was found ſo clear and convenient, that none, after once uſing it, could poſſibly have returned to the more intricate method of hieroglyphics; it muſt therefore have neceſſarily been as well ſubſequent as ſuperior to it: ſo were we to quit the eaſy, natural, and readily occurring precepts of the Goſpel, for that metaphyſical religion, ſo abſtracted and remote from vulgar apprehenſion, it were the ſame as to deſert light for darkneſs, as, after having enjoyed the advantage of alphabetic writing, to reſort to the clumſineſs and obſcurity of hieroglyphics.

[c] Neither is the before-mentioned author more fortunate, in his aſſigning the origin of the double doctrine to the uſe of figurative terms in language, in the ſtead of the literal. For Prieſts have exiſted ever ſince the commencement of ſociety; but figurative expreſſion argues that it has been long eſtabliſhed, and conſiderably improved: in this caſe,

[b] Profeſſor Kant's.

[c] Condorcet, p. 62, 63.

therefore,

therefore, the effect would be prior to the cauſe. The truth is, that mythology is owing to a contrary cauſe; namely, to the too ſtrict uſe of the literal, inſtead of the figurative meaning. To reſolve its difficulty, recourſe muſt be had, not to fancy, but memory; not the principles of painting, poetry, or metaphor; but analogy, definition, and etymology, muſt throw light upon the ſubject. This author, therefore, though the double doctrine certainly exiſted, yet has failed in aſſigning the cauſes of it, as well as in repreſenting it for the purpoſes of myſtery and deſpotiſm, as excluſively the invention of Prieſts.

[d] What abſurdities may be expected from an author, who imagines the increaſe of ſcience likely to extend the term of human life to antediluvian duration? This, could even the boaſted virtue of the firſt ages be reſtored, would not exempt the human race from undergoing the certain fate which at laſt awaits them; a long delay of which would, in their preſent circumſtances, only increaſe their miſery, and detain them from that quiet and peaceful harbour, which, after a tedious and weariſome voyage, we muſt all wiſh to find.

[d] Vide Condorcet, p. 369.

Indeed, under the preſent circumſtances of the world and of ourſelves, nothing can be ſuppoſed more miſerable, than that a man ſhould be doomed to dwell here, oppreſſed with the inconvenient and diſtreſſing gift of immortality, eſpecially when his ſituation was compared with the joys of that city which God has prepared for them that love him, *where they ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat, but the Lamb that ſitteth on the throne ſhall feed them, and lead them by living fountains of waters, and ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

Nor is this author more at variance with the common courſe of nature, than he is with himſelf.

[c] Notwithſtanding his general charge againſt Prieſts of all deſcriptions almoſt throughout his works, as the abettors of deceit and tyranny; yet in one place he affirms, that their diſputes amongſt themſelves tended to undeceive mankind, and to expoſe the weakneſs of thoſe bonds in which they had been before enthralled. All therefore were not faſt friends

[c] Vide Condorcet, p. 108.

to

to arbitrary power, elſe they had remained more firmly united for the purpoſe of ſupporting and continuing it.

[f] Forgetful of his accuſation of them in ſeveral paſſages, as generally hypocritical and vicious, in another place he repreſents them as diſapproving of the unſeemly conduct of ſome of their brethren, and appealing, in reproach of them, to the repoſitories of the common faith. Vicious conduct with vicious principles is infinitely leſs culpable than the ſame conduct with good—nay, if the principles are good, their intrinſic worth cannot be impaired by the occaſional ill behaviour of thoſe who embrace them; neither can *they* be repreſented as entirely depraved, who wiſh their own conduct, as well as that of others, to be judged by applying to it pure and pious principles.

[g] In one place he likewiſe declares, that it is according to nature that both ſexes ſhould be equally reſtrained by the marriage-contract, and, according to liberty, that either ſhould diſſolve the union, when it became burthenſome or diſagreeable. In [h] another part of his

[f] Condorcet, p. 205. [g] Ibidem, p. 329, 356.
[h] Ibidem, p. 20.

work he traces the riſe of ſociety from the ties of family, which he ſays is an impulſe of nature, indicated by the reciprocal affection of parents and their offspring continuing longer in the human than in any other ſpecies, even after the purpoſes of nouriſhment and education have ceaſed. Now this proceeds from him, who a little before had profeſſed himſelf an advocate of ſuch liberty and licentiouſneſs, as rather makes it difficult to diſtinguiſh the father, and cannot produce much reverence to the mother. However, the laws made in conſequence of ſuch an extravagant opinion have been, or muſt ſoon be repealed; a compliance with them having been found productive of extreme miſery. Conceit and Atheiſm therefore, in this reſpect, have been obliged to yield to the rational and decent precepts of revelation.

There never was a greater inſtance than this author of the power of human learning to inflate, and, as it were, intoxicate the mind. Such attainments therefore are with great propriety very little regarded in Scripture, particularly when compared with virtue and righteouſneſs. It is to mathematical learning, it ſeems, and the modern diſcoveries in natural philoſophy, that all theſe fancied

cied advantages are owing. Now, not to dwell long on the enquiry, whether theſe ſtudies are properly applied in ſearching after moral truth, this is certain, that no new tenets, however well founded, or ſeemingly ingenious, can poſſibly ſet aſide what has been once eſtabliſhed on the ſure baſis of indiſputable fact, and the correſpondent atteſtation of hiſtory. But this is a courſe of literature, which ſuch authors, as the one at preſent conſidered, neither purſue themſelves, nor recommend to others, unleſs through the medium of their own deſultory and mangled compilations. However, if we would reap all the benefits to be expected from ſuch a ſtudy, we muſt apply ourſelves to the original; that is to ſay, to what are now called the learned languages. Indeed, no tranſlation of works, profeſſedly written on controverted ſubjects, is to be depended upon; nor can there be a greater ſign of the degeneracy of the preſent age, than the low eſtimation in which it is now become the faſhion to hold thoſe real keys of erudition, from which have been derived almoſt all the arts and ſciences that have illumined mankind, for a conſiderable portion of the period in which they have ſojourned in this vale of ſin and miſery, conveying

veying down the ſtream of time the rich and copious ſtores of hiſtoric truth, and of political as well as of religious knowledge.

But the ſufficiently verſed in theſe languages will not only be enabled to confirm their faith, from the conſtant atteſtation afforded to it by the inſtructive page of hiſtory, but alſo further to increaſe it by the ſtudy, perhaps by the elucidation, of the antient prophecies, which ſtill remain unfulfilled; which conſtitute a ſeries of continued miracles, as it were occaſionally to revive the zeal of ſucceeding Chriſtians to the end of time.

How uſeful, then, would our progreſs be in the ſtudy of this ſtill myſterious part of revelation, which yet directs us to look for and expect the eſtabliſhment of the New Jeruſalem, the city of our God, and of the Lamb, and which, as we are told, will be announced by ſigns predicted in prophecy, ere it actually takes place. And how will the expectation of, and thorough confidence in the reality of it, as well generally influence our moral conduct, as particularly inſpire us with a deſire of entering into that heavenly city, and ſtrike us with apprehenſion leſt we ſhould be prohibited or excluded from it!

Such then are the advantages to be derived

rived from the ſtudy of general hiſtory; and of which we of this place more eſpecially have ſo eminent an opportunity of availing ourſelves. Our Creator poſſeſſing infinite bliſs and happineſs, confined them not to himſelf, but communicated them to others; not merely to numberleſs people, but to infinite worlds. It is on this condition ſolely that objects inferior to him are diſtinguiſhed by divine favours, otherwiſe they would be more ungrateful than the very inanimate parts of creation, many of which, *though having neither ſpeech nor language, yet is their ſound gone out into all lands, and their words, as it were, unto the ends of the world. How ſweet then are the feet of thoſe who bring the glad tidings of peace,* who lead men from the cares and anxieties of this wicked world, to that glorious and eternal city, *whoſe builder and founder is God;* who not only are employed in preparing legitimate inhabitants for it, but alſo in creating freſh joy to thoſe already enrolled amongſt its citizens, by recovering to hopes of admittance to it thoſe once far gone, and loſt in errors, vices, and crimes! Animated with ſuch proſpects ourſelves, let us humanely and generouſly diſcover them to others; freely having received, let us freely give, and be proud of the

the diſtinction of being fellow-labourers with Chriſt and with God. In our journey to the city which we profeſs to ſeek, let us be careful to engage as many aſſociates as we can, and, if it be poſſible, *not to loſe one*; to ſtate all the motives we can to engage men to purſue it, and to remove every obſtacle or impediment that may ariſe in their way thither. To contribute, though in a ſmall degree, to ſo deſirable a purpoſe, is the deſign of theſe Lectures; which alone, it is hoped, will excuſe all the deficiencies in the execution.

FINIS.

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

On SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1795.

Hunc saltem accumulem donis, et fungar inani
Munere. VIRGIL.

JOHN xi. 36.

Then ſaid the Jews, Behold, how he loved him!

THIS was the reflection made by the ſpectators at ſeeing the tears of the bleſſed Jeſus at the tomb of Lazarus, in whoſe family he was intimate, and with whom he had contracted a particular friendſhip; nay, whom by a miracle, as extraordinary as it was effectual, as a proof of his divine power, and to comply with the requeſt of the ſiſters of the deceaſed, he raiſed from the dead after he had lain four days in the grave

Indeed, the Evangeliſt's account of our Saviour's grief on this occaſion, compriſed in two words only, ſeems to call our attention to it, and to diſcriminate it as a circumſtance worthy of our ſerious conſideration and repeated regard: *Jeſus wept*; *Then ſaid the Jews, Behold, how he loved him!* Yet that ſame Jeſus was Lord of all things in heaven and in earth, equal to the Father as touching his Godhead. If then the indulgence of thoſe affections, by which we ſo pleaſingly culti-

vate

vate virtuous friendſhip while ſojourning in this ſublunary ſcene, was eſſentially wrong, ſurely he who was perfection itſelf had not been ſo diſtinguiſhed for it; ſince he came into the world, that he might in all things leave us an example, that we might follow his ſteps: nay, if that fated journey, which we muſt all take, had been, circumſtanced as we are, a blot or imperfection in the plan of Providence, and not on the whole conducive to our greater advantage, how eaſy for him, who was likewiſe Omnipotence itſelf, either at firſt never to have introduced it, or to have ſuppreſſed it afterwards, and thus not only to have removed all pain and grief, but alſo entirely to have done away their cauſes. But the Lord of life himſelf underwent that common calamity, and ſo reconciled us to it, by repreſenting it as a paſſage to a better, and to an eternal exiſtence: yet to confirm the utility, and avow the amiableneſs of ſorrow for departed friends, he, who was the moſt perfect character ever known, was conſpicuous for it, and on this occaſion particularly ſhewed himſelf *a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief.*

For ſorrow viewed in a natural light, though never at firſt willingly admitted, yet in the end

end fails not to improve and relieve our nature. We ſhould on many occaſions be nearly hardened to ſtone, did not theſe ſoftening drops abundantly flow; which, though they prove the weakneſs, yet are they at the ſame time an infallible ſign of the amiableneſs of our diſpoſition. In ſuch ſituations likewiſe, the ſtreaming eye naturally awakens the ſympathy of others, which they in general, unleſs they are ſadly debaſed and embruted, are ready enough to impart, but which the afflicted themſelves, on another occaſion, from the remembrance of their own ſorrows, are ſtrongly impelled to return; and thus may even grief itſelf be ſaid to tend to the general advantage, as well of thoſe who indulge, as of thoſe who commiſerate it.

Indeed as all paſſions, when carried to exceſs, are blameable, ſo ſorrow, when extravagant, is no longer juſtifiable, not even by our Saviour's example, who in all things promoted our comfort, in none our abſolute diſquiet. For then ſorrow becomes worldly, and the end of it is death; but when of a godly ſort, it attains its beſt purpoſes, and worketh repentance to ſalvation, not to be repented of. It is certainly even good to be afflicted, when

a more accurate obſervance of the divine ſtatutes is the conſequence. Did not the intervening hand of ſalutary chaſtiſement thus check us in our career of vanity and diſſipation, how cloſely attached ſhould we be to this earth; how diſinclined to, and diſqualified for, that better ſtate, which can alone ſatisfy the deſires of an immortal ſoul! When amidſt the conſtant decay and ſucceſſion of earthly objects we ſee not merely the more advanced in years, but thoſe who ſet out with us, nay thoſe who are younger than ourſelves, perhaps our acquaintance and friends, diſappear, our ſorrow, if it be at all effectual to our reformation, will not fail to remind us of the manifeſt brevity and incertitude of our preſent life. Whatever nature has of frail and tranſitory, the fading flower, the ephemeral inſect, the momentary meteor, repreſent the ſimilarly rapid caducity of man. What remedy then againſt the uncertainty and inſtability of the preſent ſcene, but to ſecure an intereſt in the more permanent and eternal! If reflection, which, but for the interference of ſorrow, we had never known, engages us to do this, it has certainly been of infinite advantage to us, and has anſwered one of the purpoſes of our

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God and Saviour, in implanting it in our breaſts, and in himſelf becoming, as in the text, ſo eminent an example of it.

But when merit, talents, virtue die, how is our nature mortified, where otherwiſe there would be abundant matter for vanity and preſumption! Yet here too ſorrow, if rightly applied, would direct to uſeful reflexions, and lead from the contemplation of *their* excellencies, whoſe departure we deplore, to him, whom we ſhould conſider as the principal pattern, and original archetype of all perfection. If meekneſs, virtue, and amiableneſs are ſo attractive in man, how much more ſo muſt ſimilar moral attributes be in him from whom man had his being, and who likewiſe impreſſed on his mind ſuch commendable qualities! How could Epicurus ſay the univerſe was owing to chance; or the Stoics that it was animated by a ſoul of no more reaſon or ſentiment than elementary fire? Can any thing give what it hath not? Theſe rare inſtances then of human excellence are indiſputable proofs of there exiſting ſomewhere benevolence ever exerciſed in our behalf, compaſſion ever inclined to relieve us, and power ever ready to protect us. The ſenſible heart, therefore, is affected at inſtances of baſeneſs, ingra-

titude, hypocriſy; not merely as itſelf is concerned, but as they tend to weaken one ſpecies of evidence for the being of a God; while it repoſes with pleaſure and complacency on the conſideration of ſuch characters as were famous in their lives for ſcience, virtue, religion; ſince they fill up the chaſm that remained vacant in the proof of a preſiding Providence, and tend to complete the otherwiſe apparently defective plan of creation, and to connect the preſent world with one infinitely better.

Yes, the poſſeſſed of merit, talents, virtue, die; yet *let us hope not eternally; for ſurely the care of them is with the Lord, and their reward is with the moſt High.* Nor indeed was it fitting that thoſe emanations, as it were, of divine goodneſs ſhould be long ſeparated from the inexhauſtible ſource of benevolence whence they ſprung: as they were ſent hither in ſome meaſure to reconcile us to our corrupted nature, ſo does their departure tend to confirm the hopes of its renovation and recovery. For were this the only ſphere of their exiſtence, why ſo ſhort their abode here? But if they are removed to an happier reſidence, then it is ſurely well with them, and matter of conſolation to us, to conſider that where they are we

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ſhall be likewiſe. Such lives, and ſuch deaths, not only confirm the arguments ſtruck out by the ingenious antients for the immortality of the ſoul, which before the diſcoveries of revelation were not entirely to be depended upon, but alſo ſtrengthen and ſupport the promiſes of Religion herſelf; for ſuch characters we admire when living, and regret when dead. Now no innocent deſire was ever implanted in vain; there is therefore reaſon to confide in Religion, when ſhe aſſures us, that our admiration of extraordinary merit in thoſe gone before us ſhall not be without its effect; that, if by patient *continuance in well doing we ſeek for it*, we ſhall be permitted to partake with them in happineſs, where pure and ſincere friendſhip ſhall not be again interrupted, but reciprocal love and affection ſhall know no end.

Such are the reflections ſuggeſted by religious ſorrow; and where the characters that occaſioned it were eminent and extraordinary, none that were acquainted with them can poſſibly be unconcerned: yet, as ſerious ſentiments but occaſionally prevail, it is the preacher's province, at leaſt his apology, that, whenever they manifeſt themſelves, he takes advantage of them for the purpoſes of moral improvement, of devotion, of piety. Thus

the death of ſuch men is rendered as inſtructive as their lives. All imputation of flattery is avoided, and their memory is recalled for ends to which the whole tenour of their actions was ſubſervient, and to which, could they themſelves be ſuppoſed ſenſible of what is paſſing, they would not be entirely averſe.

What has been ſaid, is intended to excite in your minds the recollection of [a] a great and extraordinary character (otherwiſe the introduction of him here had been ſomewhat improper), of whom the preſent year has deprived this place; one who, if any ever were, is ſurely worthy of being recorded as an example of ſingular merit, and of punctual performance of the reſpective duties of every ſtation to which he was advanced.

Indeed what ſtation could be unſuitable, what obligation burthenſome, or what emergency oppreſſive, to him whom nature had endued with ſuch ſtrong and penetrating abilities? The moſt difficult ſubjects, the moſt perplexing queſtions, the moſt abſtruſe diſquiſitions, as if touched by the hand of magic, became eaſy and diſentangled in his hands; a nice diſcrimination of character, and

[a] Dr. Dennis, the late Preſident of St. John's College.

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the happieſt conjecture as to probabilities, enabled him to predict ſuch events only as were ſure to come to paſs, and never to afford any advice which you afterwards repented of purſuing. His countenance was always marked with ſagacity, frequently animated with ſentiment and benevolence, and his manners were equally ſimple as ſincere. Being ſuch himſelf, an affected character was his abhorrence; perhaps he deteſted nothing more, except it were flattery. He was the laſt in the world to have ſaid, though many of high repute for underſtanding have ſolicited fame from others by the expreſſion, *orna me*—the world would not win him on any ſubject to ſpeak otherwiſe than he actually thought. He was naturally the meekeſt mortal living; yet his perſeverance and intrepidity, where he thought his duty concerned, were aſtoniſhing; otherwiſe he was gentle and placable, ſuppreſſing all animoſity in himſelf, and promoting peace and harmony among others.

This amiableneſs of diſpoſition, manifeſted during a whole life, produced him many friends, of whom he loſt none; for his counſel, his ſupport, his aſſiſtance, were always at the ſervice of thoſe who moſt wanted them. If he had any enemies, they did not long con-

tinue ſo; for they too were ſubdued by his impartial kindneſs and unremitted endeavours to do them good. His converſation was more than entertaining, it was delightful; as influenced by an heart eminently undiſguiſed, liberal, and ſocial. "I know," ſaid he, "that "a man may ſeclude himſelf from, and at laſt "hate all mankind; but ſo will not I." None therefore that ever knew him, but prized his acquaintance, which none ever was obliged, through abſence or avocations, to forego, but regretted it; for it was impoſſible to know him long without diſcovering that he was of the ſtricteſt integrity, the moſt unſullied honour, and of the pureſt principles, as well of religion as morality.

As a ſcholar too, his diſtinctions were eminent; and to me, at leaſt, his knowledge appeared moſt valuable, becauſe moſt practical. The Latin language, particularly the idioms, the very life and ſoul of it, he poſſeſſed *ad unguem*, as it is called. In theſe days, when reaſon, like virtue, ſeems in a great degree to have deſerted us, as a logician he had few equals. No occaſion ever ſaw him deficient in the more abſtruſe or recondite parts of ſcience. Nay, as he was immenſely diſtant from the parade ſo uſual with ſmatterers, ſo were you not

not unfrequently ſurpriſed by his very extenſive acquaintance with the modern languages. His elegant mind likewiſe, at intervals, expatiated in the fields of taſte, and in the excurſions of refined amuſement. In his youth he had not unſucceſsfully attempted poetry. Of muſic too and of painting he was no incompetent judge; accompliſhments which are highly ornamental, yet not abſolutely neceſſary in thoſe who may be ſuppoſed almoſt wholly engroſſed by ſuperior ſtudies and more important purſuits.

Nor, believe me, are thoſe things foreign to the peculiar purpoſes of this ſacred place; ſince ſuch employments and avocations have a moral, a religious tendency. The real ſcholar can never be totally, or for a continuance corrupt. They who have ſullied the purity of their minds amid ſpeculations that might be ſuppoſed in a great degree to render them immaculate, have uſurped and violated the dignity of letters. No! accuracy of judgment, vividneſs of fancy, a delicacy of perception as to the finer objects of ſenſe, are ſeldom partially exerciſed, but have a general influence both on theory and practice, and diſtinguiſh as well the extraordinary genius as the good man; the elevation of whoſe ſtudies,

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and even the elegance of his amuſements, keep him at an infinite diſtance from every idea of vice or ſin, of debaſement or defilement.

But with reſpect to this extraordinary perſon, what words can do juſtice to his conduct as a governor of a ſociety, which from the firſt to the laſt was directed by inflexible juſtice, and the moſt unimpeached impartiality? No irregularity could point at him as its pattern; no immorality could plead him as its excuſe. Diſcipline too, in his reluctant hand, was not the inſtrument of pique or caprice; but you ſaw it was intended merely for the correction and reformation of the offender. That firm reſolution, that adamantine integrity, that not the falling univerſe could otherwiſe ſhake, to the waywardneſs and petulancy of youth was patient, to an extraordinary degree indulgent, nay, even ſubmiſſive. The ſatisfaction that he might have inſiſted on in public, he has been often known only not to court by the interference of common friends; nay ſometimes condeſcended, for that purpoſe, to employ even perſonal remonſtrance. The dawnings of genius too he was not only generous, but laviſh, in forwarding: in ſhort, he brought the ſociety into that ſtate, that it was good for it that he governed it while he did,

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and unpropitious that he was ſo ſoon called away from it. That this was the general ſentiment, the univerſal grief ſhewn at his death abundantly proved; and the tears which every eye, almoſt without exception, ſhed at his funeral: ſo that if a ſtrict regard to his own duty, and an unremitted obſervance that others performed theirs; if to temper dignity with affability, and to connect authority with affection, ſpeak the good governor, he was indiſputably one.

That elevated and dignified manner accompanied him likewiſe into office as Vice-Chancellor. Though naturally fond of eaſe and retirement, yet, conſcious how much opinions and practices prevailing here influence the kingdom at large, he was reſolved that no dangers or difficulties ſhould deter him from exerting his abilities for the honour and advantage of this place; and ſurely if ſucceſs is a proof of propriety, his muſt be moſt unequivocal, through whom not only the Univerſity, at the Royal viſit, ingratiated itſelf with the Sovereign, but ſuch ſtrong impreſſions were received of the particular perſonal merit of the preſiding Magiſtrate, as were never afterwards, if report is to be depended upon, eraſed. When rumours of tumults and expected diſorders prevailed

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in our ſtreets, his manly mind was not abaſhed at them, but was prepared to meet them, and would doubtleſs have applied ſuitable and effectual remedies againſt them; ſo that the ſtorm that threatened the very exiſtence of the Univerſity was diſſipated, and blew over merely through the prudence and vigilance of the Chief Magiſtrate, which they who cauſed theſe alarms did not chooſe to put to the trial: his known firmneſs and intrepidity awed them into peace.

And now, it may be aſked, was this eminent and extraordinary character ſhaded with no failings? Yet is it ſomewhat unreaſonable that, as an human being, he ſhould be expected to have none. Fewer, perhaps, he had been ſuppoſed to have had, were the motives of his conduct, in all inſtances, better underſtood, and the general amiableneſs of his diſpoſition more extenſively known; for whatever might be the reſult of his actions, his intentions were always right. Perhaps too we may allow him that fault of active and ſuperior minds, the not bearing with ſufficient patience the ſlowneſs and infirmities of thoſe whoſe thoughts are not quite ſo rapid, nor ideas ſo accurate, as their own. However, if you recollect that man among men, and it is

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to be preſumed, with God, is to be judged of, not from his abſolute want of failings, but from the preponderancy of his good over his bad qualities; that likewiſe he for many years ſtruggled with a radical and inveterate diſeaſe (for to that, and that alone, and not to any mental diſquiet, his diſſolution was owing); that, leſt he ſhould afflict his friends, relations, family, he for a long time preſented hope in his countenance, while inwardly he was convinced that his caſe was abſolutely deſperate, and that the beſt men, under ſuch circumſtances, muſt have ſome allowances made for them; when all theſe things are conſidered, though in a ſolitary inſtance or two you may condemn, yet, on the whole, you will not be able not to approve, admire, and lament him.

It remains to ſpeak of him as a Chriſtian; a topic not obvious, becauſe much of the excellence of that character depends on its being confined to privacy and retirement; yet if forgiveneſs of injuries, if compaſſion for the diſtreſſed, if an hand ever ready to relieve them, ſpeak the Chriſtian, he was unqueſtionably ſuch. Sacred ſubjects formed not always the matter of his converſation: he could occaſionally digreſs, from ſevere to gay, from

from the inſtructive to the merely entertaining; but though religion employed not conſtantly his tongue, yet it was never abſent from his heart. The Chapel bell called not more conſtantly to prayers, than he attended them. Many occurrences in his life ſhewed, that, according to the advice of the antient philoſophers, particularly of Pythagoras, he at night brought himſelf to account for the actions of the preceding day; and then, if it appeared that, through haſte, or inadvertency, he had offended any, however inferior, he reſted not till he had made them ſatisfaction. Before the celebration of the ſacrament, how careful was the good man to do away all, even the leaſt ſurmiſes of enmity betwixt himſelf and thoſe who were to communicate with him in thoſe holy myſteries. The preceding night ſaw all differences compoſed, all matters of diſcipline, however minute, ſettled and concluded, that he might approach the altar in the words of David; *An offering of a pure heart will I make thee; be thou my witneſs, O Lord my God.* At laſt the attentions, he had all his life long paid to religion, were returned to him, when they were moſt neceſſary; and he was enabled to give the ultimate, yet ſtrongeſt teſtimony of the

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ſincerity of his faith, by reflecting on his approaching fate with the utmoſt compoſure and reſignation: for in the boſom of the ſociety he adorned, of the family he loved, and in the midſt of the offices of the religion he had ſo conſiſtently and ſtrenuouſly profeſſed, to his infinite advantage certainly, but to our inexpreſſible loſs, he expired.

Then was ſeparated from its frail and mortal body, the ſoul of one of the beſt of men, the beſt of huſbands, the beſt of fathers, and, alas! the beſt of friends. Yet why, when there is that within that far ſurpaſſeth *ſhow*, this ſeeming pomp and parade, as it were, of grief?—Becauſe, though the partial hand may ſomewhat overcharge the portrait, and the inexpert one fail of doing juſtice to it, yet it were better ſo done than not at all. Neither was it fitting that lineaments ſhould paſs away unnoticed, from which may be copied the ſtrongeſt expreſſions of amiableneſs, of ſcience, of friendſhip, of piety. Beſides, as to ordinary characters, oblivion caſts its undiſtinguiſhing veil alike over their death as over their life: but when the common fate involves the extraordinary inſtances of human excellence, the mind recoils on itſelf, and, for a time at leaſt, reflects on what it is, what it may be, and is then

then moſt effectually perſuaded to become what it ought to be. If any have experienced a ſimilar loſs, it were but charity to direct to the only remaining ſource of comfort and conſolation, the hopes of the Goſpel, and the promiſes of revelation. What an additional motive to continue in the accurate practice of Chriſtian obedience, to reflect that it is the only probable means, the only rational foundation for the hopes of rejoining, in a better ſtate, thoſe once the objects of our affections here, who realized in their own perſons all that we conceive of fair, of juſt, of good; who were ſent but to be recalled, and loved but to be lamented! On the preſent ſubject I could willingly exhauſt whole days, whole nights; but to prevent your fatigue, let us haſten to a concluſion. The variety of circumſtances, the enmity of enemies, the frowns of fortune, were hitherto contemned and diſregarded, till I loſt thee, deareſt friend; ſhe then convinced me of her power in earthly affairs, and how much myſelf, in particular, was expoſed to her ſhafts. There was then nothing more to be done, than to raiſe my ſupplicating hands, and intreat for mercy; yet ſtill the ſtores of philoſophy, and the comforts of religion, are near, as a ſupport againſt every ſpecies of miſchief

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or misfortune. Nay, convinced as I am that thou art removed to a far happier place, the wiſh to recall thee were ſelfiſh and injurious: but if the amiable, excellent, long obſerved, and admired qualities of thy life ſhall be faithfully tranſcribed, as far as our reſpective ſtations will allow, into my own, our connexion will then have been advantageous indeed. For while memory indelibly retains them, thou mayeſt be ſtill conſidered as regarding, as uſual, and inviting me to renew thy ſweet ſociety, thy conciliating converſation; and then our meeting again may be the happier, from our preſent ſeparation having been ſo diſpleaſing—diſtreſſing—dejecting.

[b] Vide Cic. Conſolationem, in fine. Tu vero, quando me inſigni et excellenti tuarum laude, memoriâque virtutum, tam præclare juviſti, nunc ab hominibus ſejunctus, non me deſerens, ſed aliquando reſpectans, perduc eo, ubi tua tandem collocutione conſpectuque fruar; ut et parenti tui amantiſſimo, quam potiſſimum optare debes, gratiam referas, et ego multo mihi gratiorem multoque jucundiorem congreſſum noſtrum futurum intelligam, quam inſuavis et acerbus digreſſus fuit.

THE END.

ERRATA.

P. 16. l. 5. for *the* read *thy*
18. l. 7. after *follow* dele the *ſemicolon*
39. l. 5. for *in* read *by*
58. l. 13. for *admire* read *admit*
64. l. 16. after *mean* inſert *for it*
74. l. 15. for *exiſt* read *exiſts*
82. l. 7. after *or* inſert *of*
95. l. laſt, for *all owing* read *allowing*
110. l. 11. for *they* read *it*
115. remove the reference [l] from *the* in the firſt line to *licence* in the ſeventh
117. l. 6. inſert a full point at *Catholics*
—— l. 7. after *time* dele the *colon*
126. remove the reference [s] from *even* in the thirteenth line to *our author* in the nineteenth
128. remove the reference [u] from *ſucceſſor* in the ſecond line to *ally* in the fourth
132. l. 27. after *ambition* dele —
149. l. laſt, for *are* read *is*